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MARVEL \$1
PREVIEW
No 4



**MARVEL PREVIEW
PRESENTS**

STAR-LORD™

**PREMIERE
ISSUE!**

**A NEW
CONCEPT IN
GRAPHIC
EXCITEMENT!**

**HE STALKS
THE GALAXIES!
ONE MAN...
ON A MISSION
OF COSMIC
VENGEANCE!**

PLUS:

**SWORD IN THE STAR!
A SPACE ODYSSEY**



MARVEL PREVIEW

FEATURING

STARLORD

HEROIC FANTASY IN THE FAR-FLUNG FUTURE

ARCHIE GOODWIN
Editor

JOHN WARNER
Associate Editor

**MARY WOLFMAN &
ROY THOMAS**
Consulting Editors

**BARBARA ALTMAN &
NORA MACLIN**
Design

DAN ADKINS
Art Consultant

LEN GROW
Production

GRAY MORROW
Cover

BERNIE WRIGHTSON
Frontpiece

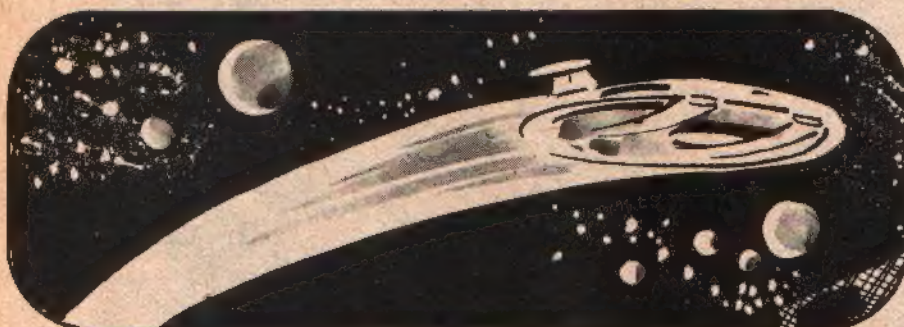


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**I SAY IT'S
I SAY**

Basically, I'm a child of the fifties. The *early* fifties. Before rock and roll. Before ducktails. Before the era Ron Howard and Tom Bosley seemed to have staked out for their own on ABC. There are probably any number of words which might describe what it was like to be thirteen years and growing up in Tulsa, Oklahoma at that time, but the one that springs to mind first is *dull*.

Except for two things: Comics and Science-fiction.

Ray Bradbury was my favorite author; EC my favorite comics company. When EC's science-fiction books actually began doing adaptations of Bradbury's works, my ecstasy knew no bounds (13 year old Oklahomans have pretty narrow notions about ecstasy). And my ideas for how a science-fiction comic should be done were rigidly, almost permanently, shaped.

Not that there weren't *other* science-fiction comics around. This was the time of heavy UFO sightings. People were very suspicious that something was going on "out there." As they had provided a legion of super-types to handle World War II, the comics industry leaped to provide more than a few stalwarts to combat any bug-eyed menaces that outer-space happened to hurl at earth and her citizens. Said stalwarts never quite achieved the popularity of super-heroes.

Particularly not with me.

Not to a dyed-in-the-wool fanatic over EC's s-f stories, with their anti-heroes and downbeat endings. Not to a constant browser of Bradbury's word poems to silent Martian cities and doomed space voyagers. There was a label for the kind of s-f most comics companies produced: *Space Opera*. Western, detective, or pirate yarns done up in space suits and rocket ships. Corny kid stuff. Just like *Tom Corbett*, *Space Cadet* on TV every afternoon, dueling villains from the program's solitary spaceship set which tended to shake each time an actor crossed its cardboard interior. Or like Buster Crabbe as *Flash Gordon* (Feature-length versions of his thirties serials were making the rounds of our local eyestrain emporiums) flying rockets apparently powered by the same sparklers five-year-olds in my neighborhood traditionally waved on the Fourth of July.

I wasn't having any of it. My kind of science-fiction was serious stuff.

Of course, I didn't totally ignore the non-EC s-f comics. After all, some of my favorite artists were doing them. There was *Captain Science* by Wally Wood and Joe Orlando, *Space Ace* by Al Williamson, *Vic Tory and his Flying Saucer* by comics veteran Bob Powell, as well as the fine-line work of Joe Maneely on something called *Speed Carter*, *Spaceman* published by a firm named Atlas which would later evolve into a firm named Marvel (Talk about roots!). I even bought some of it. But always

with a snicker. Sure, the art was all right, but the *stories*... Guys running around in ridiculous costumes—usually tights with fishbowls on their heads—zapping crazed BEMs with their ray guns. Intolerable!

Basically I was like the little girl in the *New Yorker* cartoon, who, told to eat her broccoli, replies: "I say it's spinach and I say to hell with it!" If it was *Space Opera*—nevermind the artwork—I also said to hell with it.

Which—in case you were wondering—brings us to the present and STARLORD. How did a confirmed hater of *Space Opera* come to be editing a book which features a character with all the accouterments (except maybe the fishbowl) of those BEM-zappers from my fifties adolescence? Actually, I come to it via *two* paths.

When Marv Wolfman became Editor-in-Chief of Marvel's color comic line, I inherited all the titles he had in the works for our black-and-white books. Marv had already come up with the name STARLORD and the idea of emphasizing the adventure aspects of s-f and having series characters. He tossed the ball to Steve Englehart to come up with a lead feature, and handed the back-up assignment to Bill Mantlo. I took over from there. So much for path one.

Path two? I was started on it by Roy G. Krenkel, fantasy illustrator extraordinaire and congenial madman. Roy kept touting me onto a book called THE STAR KING by Jack Vance. Its plot sounded like a western (avenging son seeking the killers of his father); and any s-f book plotted like a western could only be *one* thing, right? But RGK is not to be refused. So, under protest, I read THE STAR KING. And loved it. *Space Opera* it might have been, but the characters, the situations, and evocation of alien worlds were gripping and satisfying. Roy Krenkel and Jack Vance opened a whole area of enjoyable reading I'd been too snobbish to sample. In fact they reawakened my interest in s-f in general, which had waned considerably since my high school days.

Now that interest has brought me to STARLORD. And I'm excited to be here. Call it *Space Opera*, call it fantasy-adventure, or something else entirely. It took me a long time, but I don't think labels are so important anymore. The important thing is that we entertain you, and maybe, just maybe, give you a little something to think about along with it. Steve Englehart and Steve Gan (with some extra assistance from Bob McLeod) have tried to do that; as have Bill, Ed, Craig, and Rick on SWORD IN THE STAR. It's now up to you to decide how well they succeeded.

I'm betting that, unlike that kid from Tulsa back in the fifties, you *won't* be saying, "to hell with it."

SPACE OPERA AND TO HELL WITH IT!

THE STARLORD: WHO HE IS AND HOW HE CAME TO BE

by Steve Englehart

Like everything else in life, this is a story that begins and ends with the cosmos.

When man first rose above the animals, he did it by developing his mind. He had freed himself from the enslavement of his instincts—but as with all his other advances, that was simultaneously a blessing and a curse. He was no longer one with nature, and so was obliged to *decide* what was best for his continued survival. Obviously, he needed to learn.

Thus, he looked to the heavens, where, in contrast to the chaos on Earth, he found simplicity and order. The purposeful motion of some "stars" (actually planets) against the fixed backdrop of others brought about the alternation of day and night, the progression of the seasons, harvest and rebirth—in short, the survival of his world. A study of the stars would teach him what he wished to know; he called his craft "astrology."

Astrology was a major factor in man's life from then on. The Great Pyramid and Stonehenge are remnants of his early efforts. By the sixth century BC, enough was known to cast natal horoscopes (a map of the major celestial bodies' positions at an individual's moment of birth) with great accuracy. Until the eighteenth century AD, astrology enjoyed the highest respect of learned men in Europe, Asia, and Africa. And then—the "Age of Reason" arrived. The sciences astrology had fathered reasoned it was a superstition, and shunted it aside.

Now, as must be obvious from my past work, I'm not so much interested in reason as in reality. The question I've asked most often in my young life is "Why?", and I don't particularly care where I have to go to get

some answers. So it was that I turned on to astrology (and the Tarot, and sorcery, and mythology—but those are other stories). I suppose I should make it clear that, while I'm one of the few comics scripters *not* from Missouri, I'm still pretty hardheaded about things *being* reality, as opposed to flights of fancy (both my sun and moon are in Taurus, if it means anything to you). In any metaphysical subject, I have to be shown—and I was. Astrology works.

Once I saw that, I committed myself wholeheartedly to it, and spent the following months learning as much as I could. Then, because I have, after all, *another* major occupation, I began to figure how I could incorporate my new knowledge into my comics. I was working on a plot for DR. STRANGE late in February, and chafing under the fact that sorcery and astrology are strange bedfellows, when I got a call from Marv Wolfman in New York. "Steve," quoth he, "we're going to do a new black-and-white science fiction adventure. I want to call the lead feature STARLORD, and I'd like you to come up with the concept and character. Got any ideas about outer space?"

The sun, it should be noted, had just moved into Pisces, season of the spaced. I played with the possibilities for the rest of that month, plotted this first story in Aries, season of self, and Steve Gan and friends drew it up in Taurus, season of stabilization. Now its early June—in Gemini, season of communications—and now the words are coming.

After all the foregoing, let me also make it clear that you, the

reader, need know or believe not a thing about astrology to enjoy STARLORD. As with the heavens, it merely forms a backdrop against which events can unfold, and even if you can't tell the sun from the moon, you'll have a good time following Peter Quill's bizarre destiny. But—if you get interested in going further on your own, then that's all right, too!

All the astronomical data herein is correct. The planets really did move (or will move) into the conjunctions as shown at the times shown. (By the way, the placement of Christ's birth in 7 BC is not a mistake. Most modern historians, using independent evidence, now figure the event for that time. Even more by the way, the specific date of the conjunction was Saturday—the Hebrew holy day—March 1.)

On the other hand, the life of Peter Quill is not necessarily in accord with the stars' position on his birth-day. I have a chart of that moment pinned to the wall in front of me, and it indicates a much happier early life than I've given Peter—but if you don't go down, you can't come up. If you or one of your friends was born at or near the same time, please don't look to his hassles as your own. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons and/or institutions, etc.

And finally, once the events in this story pass 1975, the future is entirely speculative. Furthermore, it's not related to any other speculative future in the Marvel Universe.

Whew! Whatever *did* happen to simple shoot-'em-ups?

Okay, you say—that's how the Starlord came to be. But who *is* he?

Read on...



NO ONE KNOWS WHAT THE UNIVERSE IS.

MANY MEN HAVE TRIED
TO TELL US, IN RHYME
AND IN REASON, IN
SANCTITY AND SCIENCE...

... BUT
NO ONE
KNOWS.

ONE OF THE FEW
CERTAINTIES IS
THAT, IN ONE
MINUTE SECTION
OF THE COSMOS...

A CLUSTER
OF MASS AND
ENERGY IS
CALLED THE
MILKY WAY...

AND IN ONE MINUTE SECTION OF THAT,
A STAR-SUN CALLED SOL SOARS...

SURROUNDED ALWAYS BY
ITS SATELLITES: ASTEROIDS,
COMETS, PLANETS... AND
THEIR SATELLITES.

ONE OF THE PLANETS IS
EARTH, AND SINCE TIME
BEGAN FOR ITS INHABI-
TANTS, THEY HAVE SEEN
SIGNS IN THE MOVING
LIGHTS ABOVE THEM.

ONE SUCH SIGN OCCURED IN THE YEAR SOME CALL 7 BC, WHEN THE CONTINUOUS ORBITS OF--

--URANUS--



--SATURN--



--JUPITER--



--THE SUN--

--MERCURY--

--VENUS--

--AND THE
MOON--

--BROUGHT THEM ALL MORE OR LESS INTO LINE ABOVE EARTH, NOT ALL OF THEM WERE VISIBLE TO THE HUMAN EYE-- BUT THOSE THAT WERE, IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOWED--

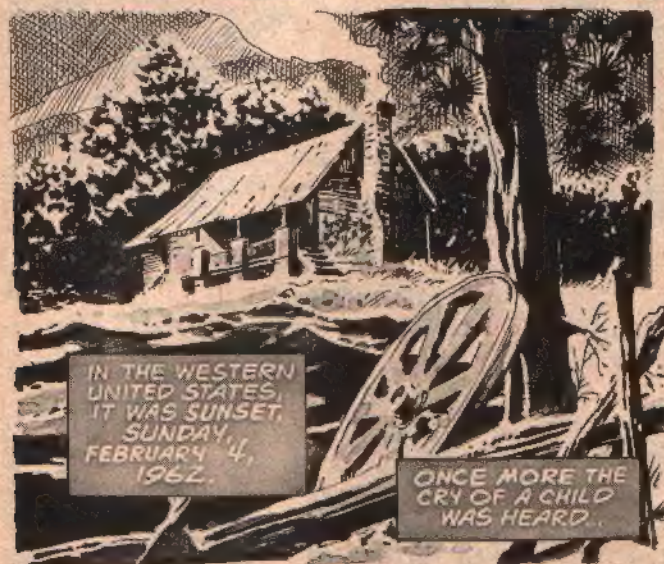
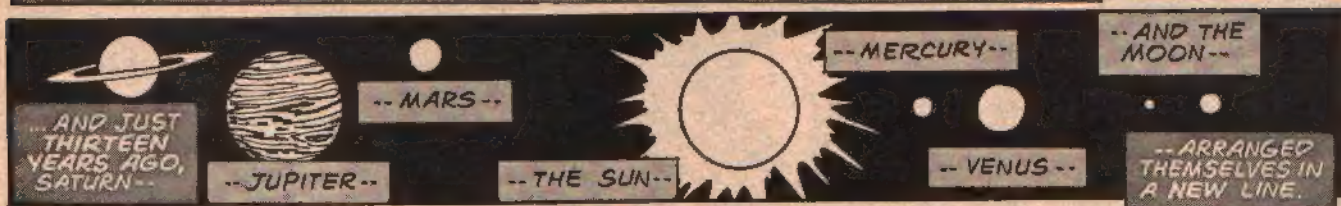
-- FORMED A GREAT, GLOWING
LIGHT IN THE EAST, JUST
BEFORE SUNRISE. THE WISE
MEN OF THE TIME, KNOWN AS
THE MAGI, OR "ASTROLOGERS"--

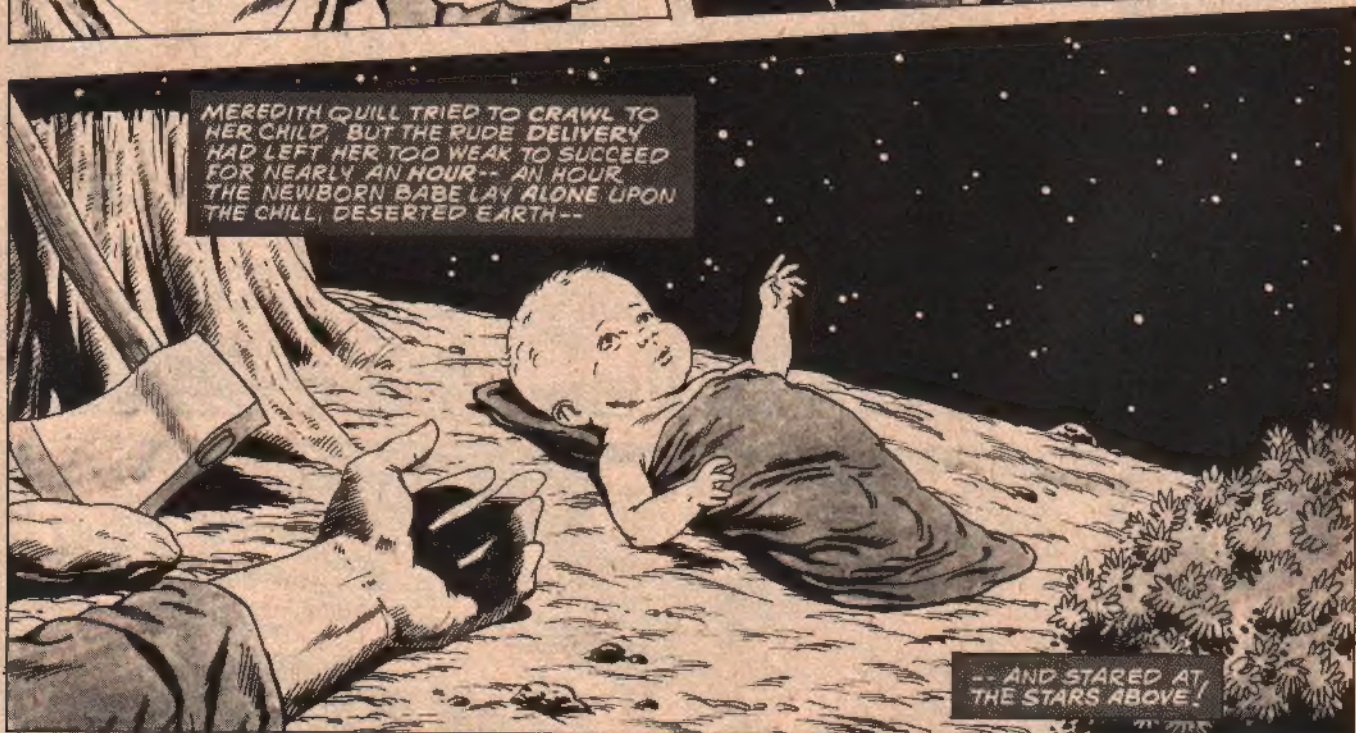
-- FOLLOWED THAT WHICH
SEEMED A STAR--

-- TO FIND
A BABE IN
BETHLEHEM,
WHOSE
DESTINY
WAS TO
CHANGE THE
WORLD!

WHAT WAS THE
RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN
THOSE
PLANETS AND
THAT CHILD?

NO ONE KNOWS... BUT SOME SUSPECT. IN ANY EVENT, THE PLANETS MOVED ON...





STARLORD FIRST HOUSE: **EARTH!**

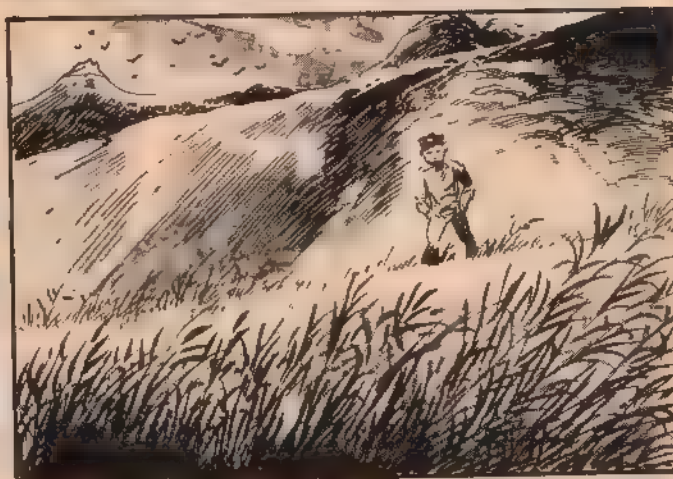
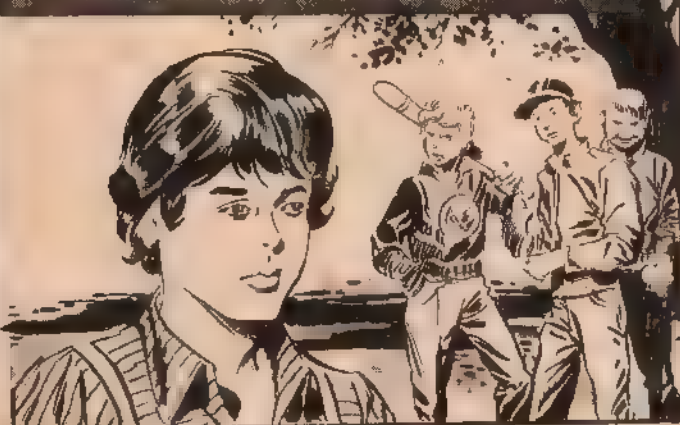
ACREDITH WITHDREW FROM LIFE AFTER THAT NIGHT. BOTH PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY, SHE GREW PALE AND FRAY--AND SOME OF THE TOWNSPEOPLE SAID IT WAS ONLY THE REEF CARE FOR HER SON THAT KEPT HER FROM LOSING HER GRIP ENTIRELY.



BUT SHE WAS A KIND AND GENTLE MOTHER, EVEN FOR THOSE HUNDRED MEMBERS.

SHE RAISE PETER QUIETLY.

HE GREW STRONG AND STRAIGHT LIKE A YOUNG SAPLING--THOUGH BY 1969 IT WAS EVIDENT HIS MOTHER'S EYES HAD SET HIM TOO APART.



STILL, EVERY ONE NEEDS A WORLD TO EXPLORE--AND FINDS IT. YOUNG PETER FOUND THE THIRD SEASON OF STAR TREK.



DELAYED TO SUNDAY AFTERNOON BY THE LOCAL STATION.

AND THE U.S. LANDING ON THE MOON, WHICH WAS LIVE.

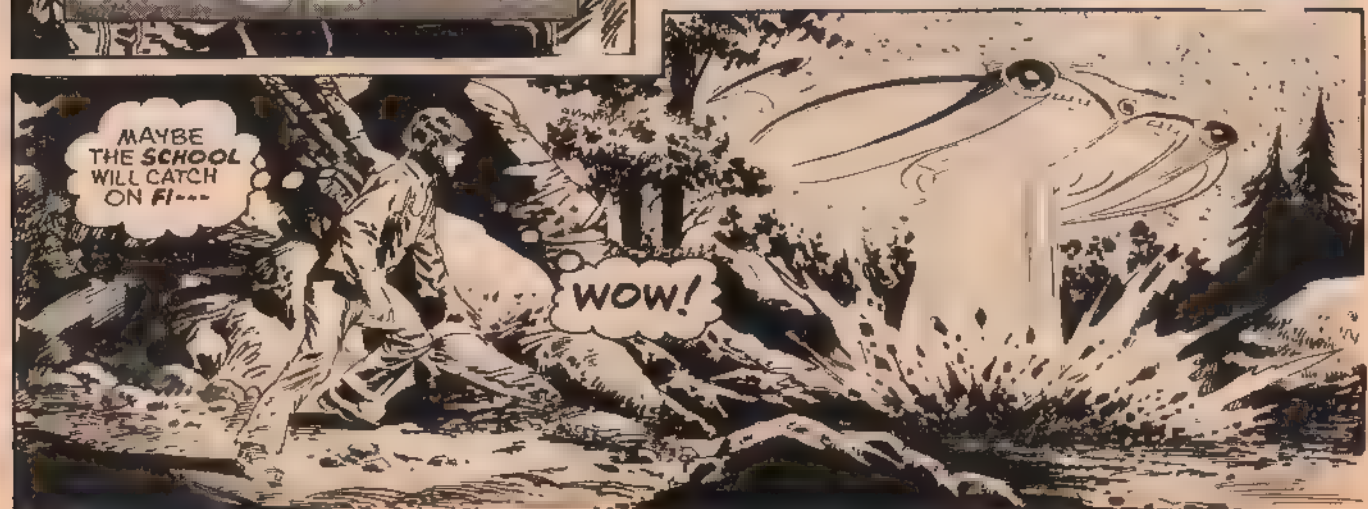
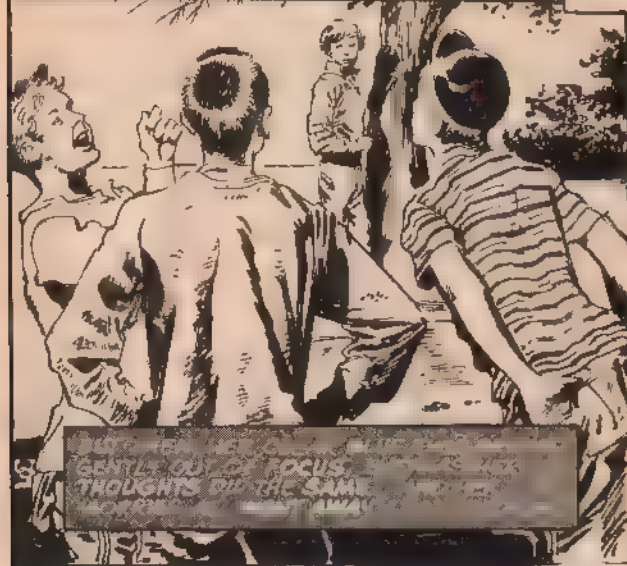
TELEVISION AND LONG WALKS--THOSE WERE HIS GREATEST PLEASURES. IT WAS WHILE WALKING IN THE SPRING OF 1969



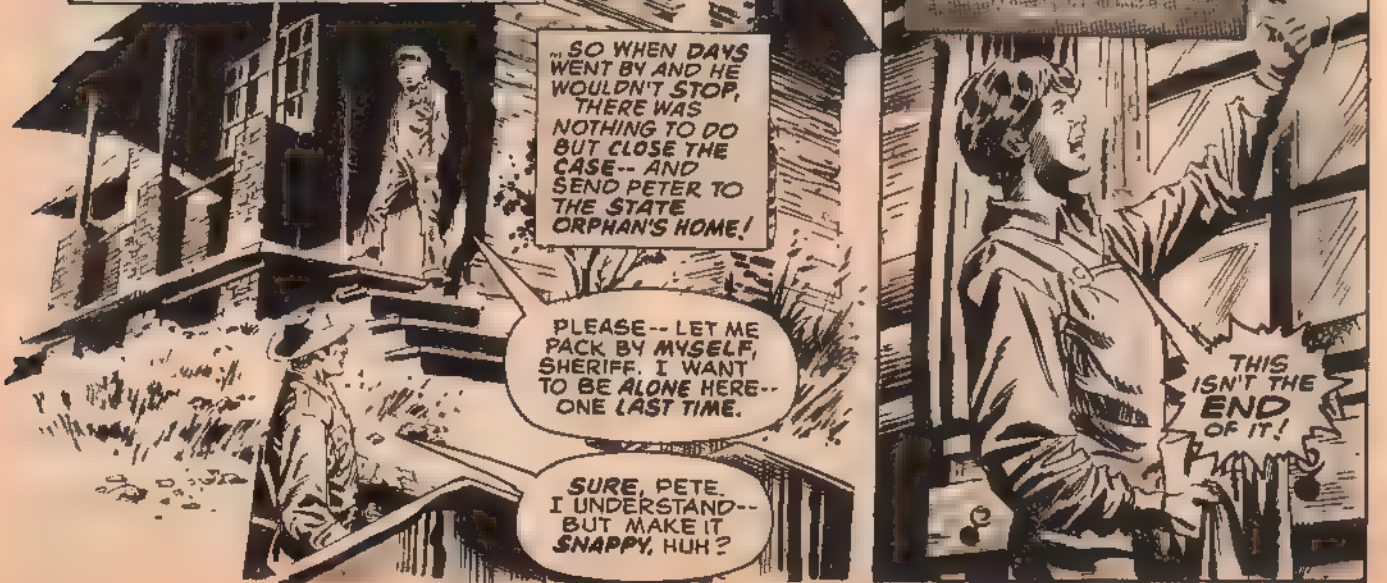
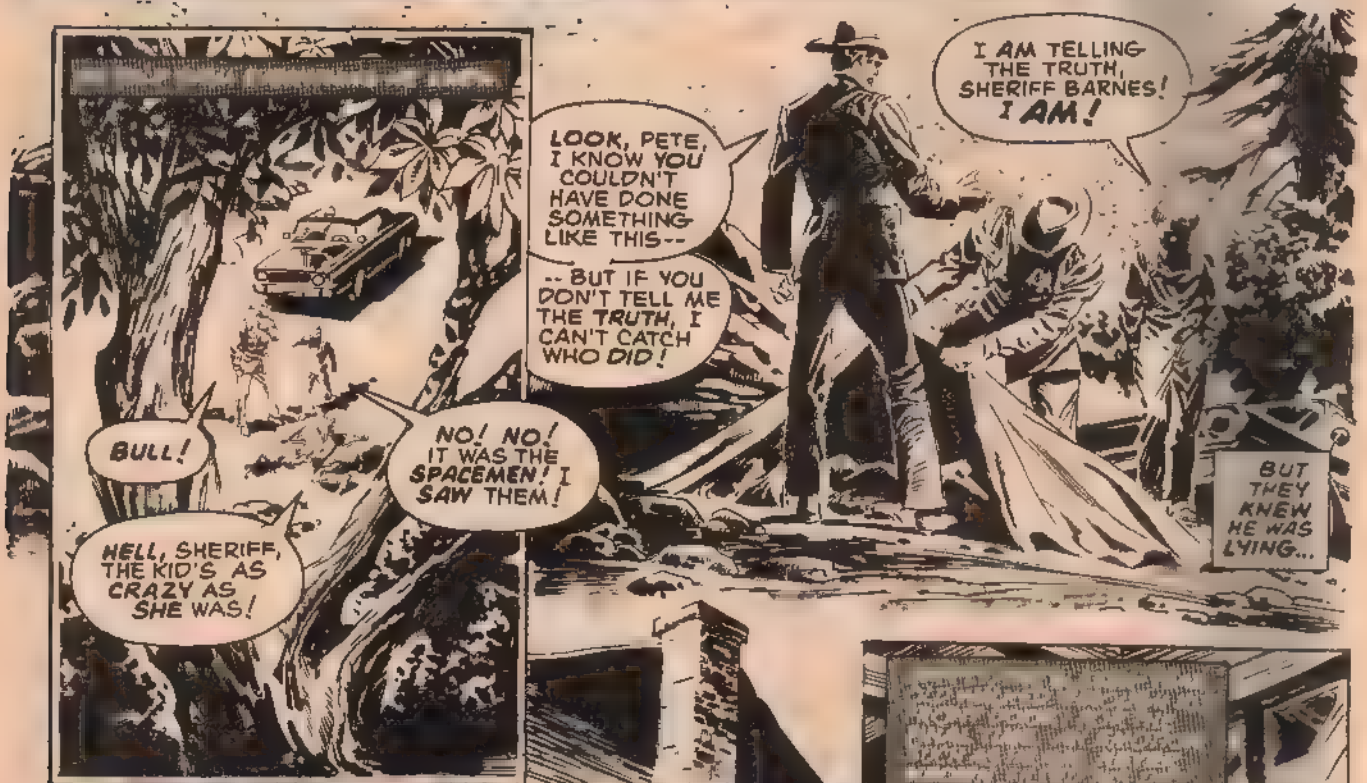
THAT HE FOUND A STRANGE SHARRED CIRCLE ON A BAR WILLEY FLOOR.

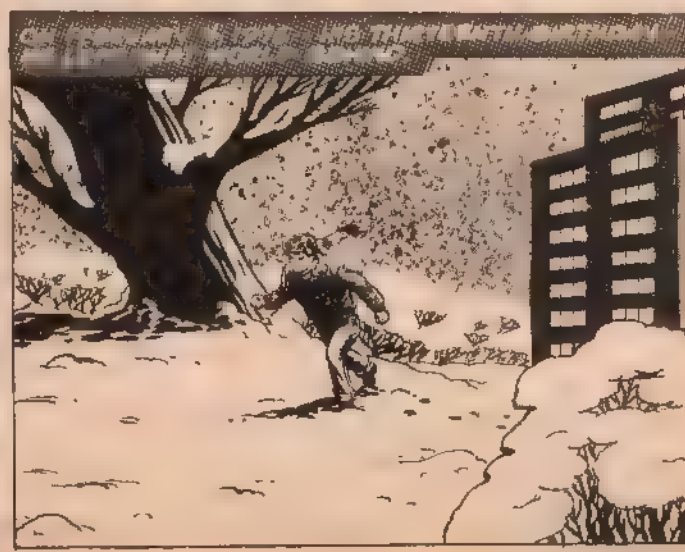
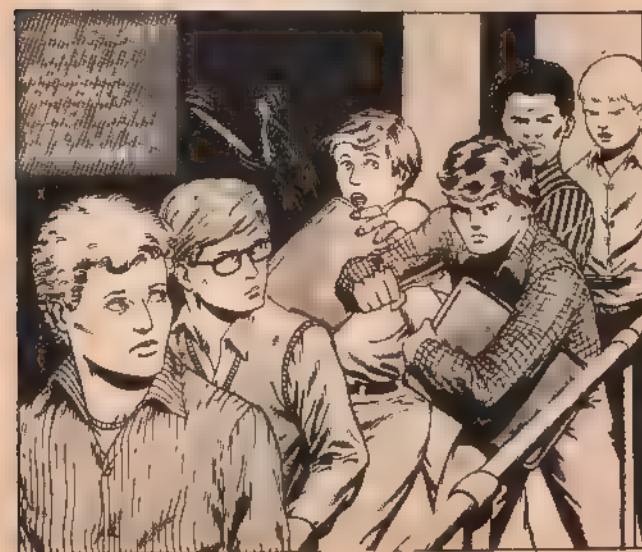
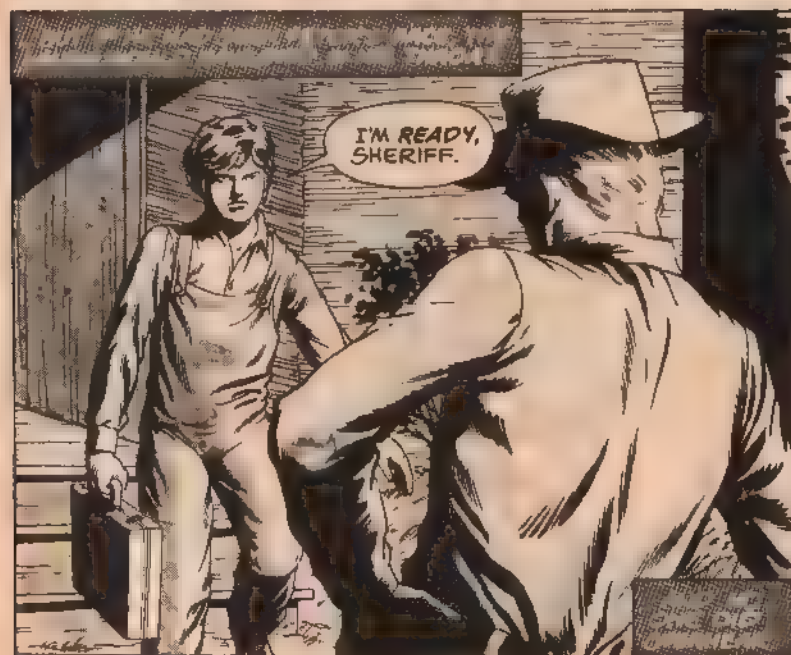
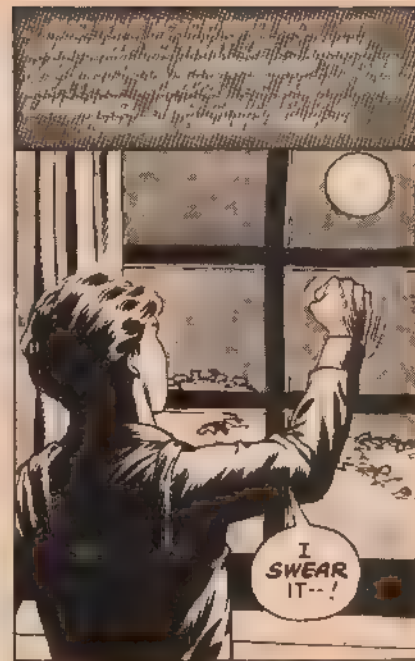


"DREAMS AREN'T REAL, EITHER," HIS MAMA SAID-- AND SHE THOUGHT, "HE DREAMS TOO MUCH! HE NEEDS A FATHER! I'M NOT ENOUGH!"









NOVEMBER 11, 1967: NASA
TRAINING CENTER, HOUSTON.

OKAY, MEN!
THAT'S IT FOR
TODAY!

YOU'RE
ADAPTING
REAL WELL
TO WEIGHT-
LESSNESS--

--ESPECIALLY
YOU, CAPTAIN
QUILL! KEEP
IT UP!

DAMN! WHO'S THAT, BETTY? IS HE NEW HERE?

HE'S ALL
RIGHT!

YEAH, ON THE OUTSIDE,
MAYBE. BUT INSIDE, HE'S
THE COLDEST FISH YOU'LL
MEET THIS SIDE OF A
SARDINE TIN!

THAT'S PETER QUILL,
CAROL, AND WHEN HE
CAME DOWN FROM
OHIO LAST WEEK, I
DROPPED BY TO--
AH-- WELCOME HIM
TO THE BASE.

YOU WOULDN'T
BELIEVE HIS APART-
MENT! IT'S JAMMED
FULL OF STAR CHARTS
AND ASTRONOMY
EQUIPMENT-- LIKE
HE WAS HERE FOR
A LAB JOB, INSTEAD
OF ASTRONAUTICS!

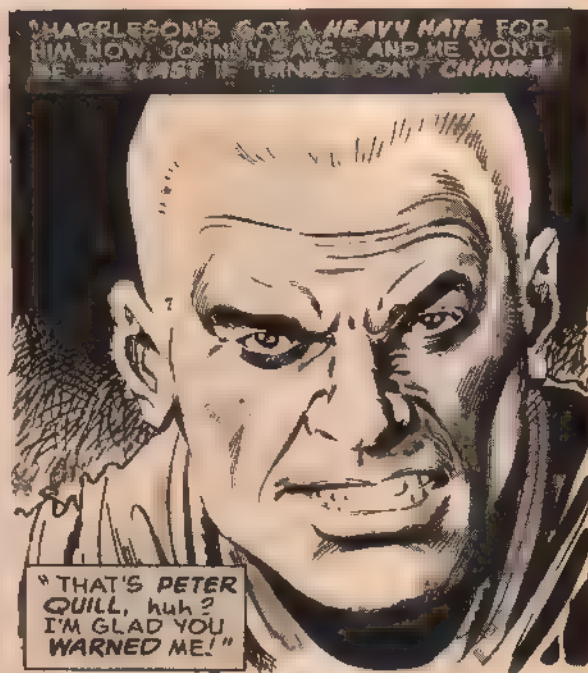
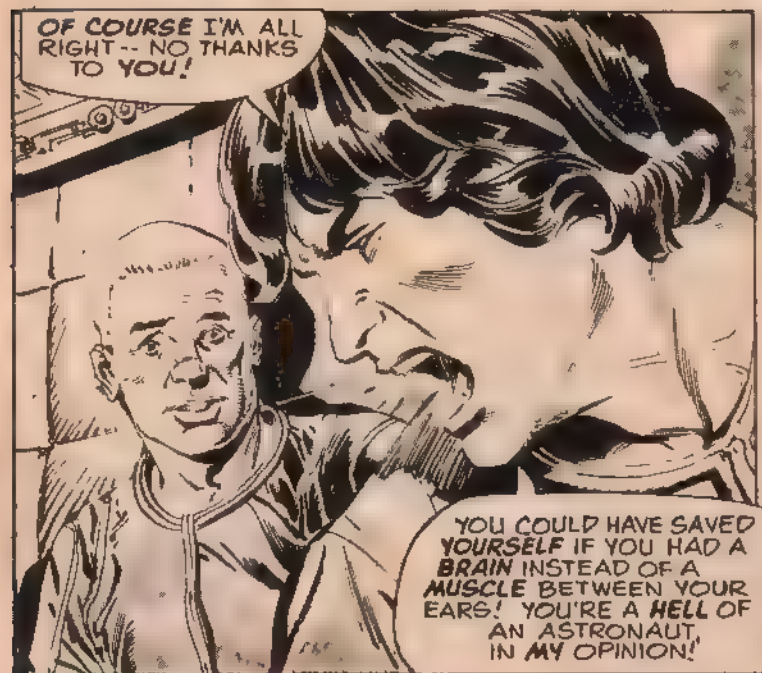
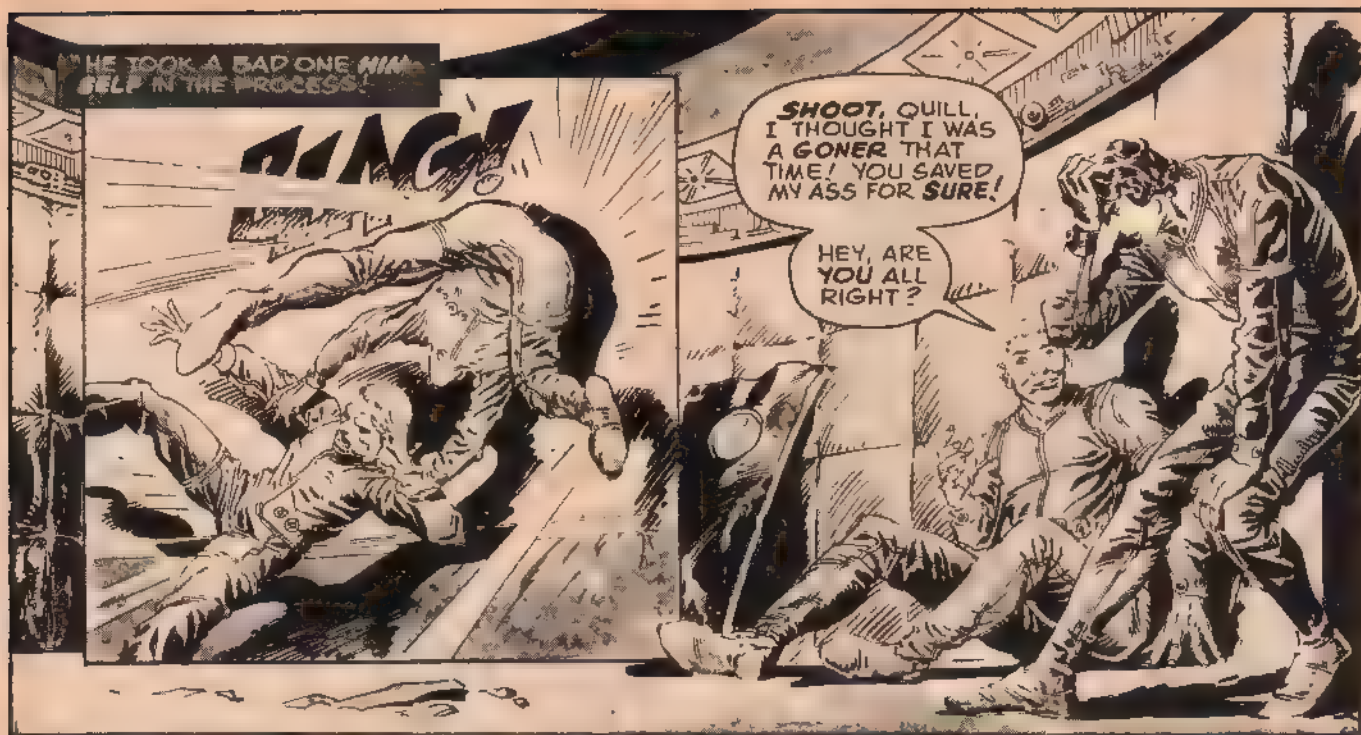
THEY SAY HE'S A
GOOD STUDENT.
COLLINS SAYS
ONE OF THE
BEST EVER.

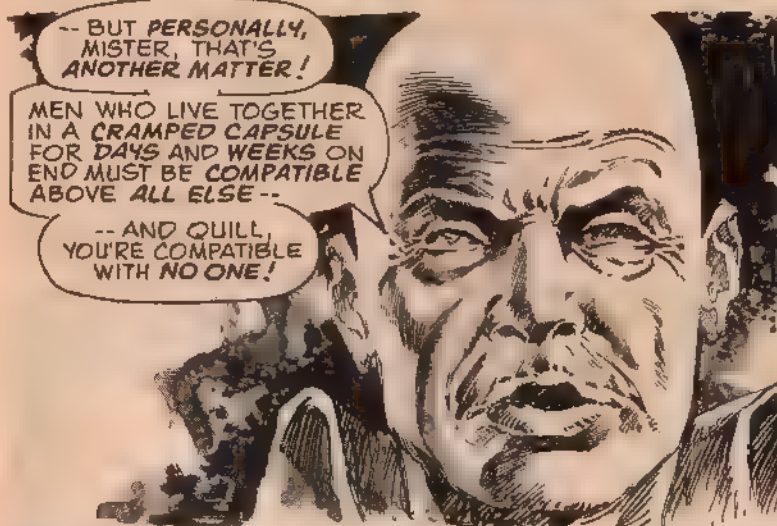
BUT CAROL, HE'S GOT AN OWL AT
HIS PLACE! AN OWL, FOR CHRIST'S
SAKE-- NAMED AL! AND HE TALKS
TO IT LIKE IT WAS A PET!

MAYBE IT IS A PET. VENTURES
CAROL. MY BROTHER IN BERKELEY
HAS ONE OF THOSE, YOU KNOW,
GREGGIE-- AND THEY WHISTLE
EACH OTHER.

"YEAH," SNAPS
BETTY SOURLY.
"BUT AFTER
CAPTAIN PETER
QUILL FINISHED
TALKING TO HIS
DAMN BIRD--

-- HE DIDN'T TALK TO ME!"





REJECTED! FOR SIXTEEN YEARS, I'VE DEVOTED MY EVERY WAKING MOMENT AND ALL OF MY DREAMS TO ONE THING--JUST ONE THING--

--BECOMING AN ASTRONAUT!



THAT'S ALL I WANT IN LIFE!

WHY CAN'T I EVER GET WHAT I WANT, AL? WHY DO PEOPLE CARE SO MUCH ABOUT WHETHER YOU LIKE THEM OR THEY LIKE YOU?

YOU LIKE ME, DON'T YOU, AL?



whooo-o?



whooo?

YOU'RE MY ONLY FRIEND!

I DON'T ASK FOR MUCH! IT'S JUST THAT THIS IS THE ONLY WAY-- THE ONLY WAY I CAN GET INTO SPACE!

FLASH GORDON DIED A LONG TIME AGO. THERE'S NO STARSHIP ENTERPRISE YET! I HAVE TO BE AN ASTRONAUT, SO I CAN GET OUT THERE, AND THEN--



--AND THEN-- WHAT?

WILL THE ALIENS GREET ME ON MARS? WILL THEIR SAUCERS ZIP UP ALONGSIDE MY CUMBERSOME CAPSULE SO THEY CAN THROW THEMSELVES ON MY MERCY?



OH GOD! ALL THIS TIME I'VE THOUGHT SHEER WILL COULD MAKE ANYTHING COME TRUE-- COULD SOMEHOW MAKE ME FIND THOSE MURDERERS OUT THERE--

--BUT IT CAN'T! IT'S ALL BEEN A DREAM! I'VE FOOLED MYSELF FOR SIXTEEN YEARS!

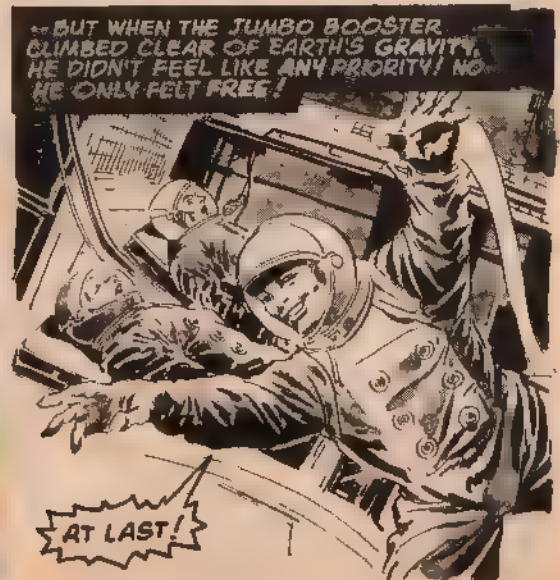
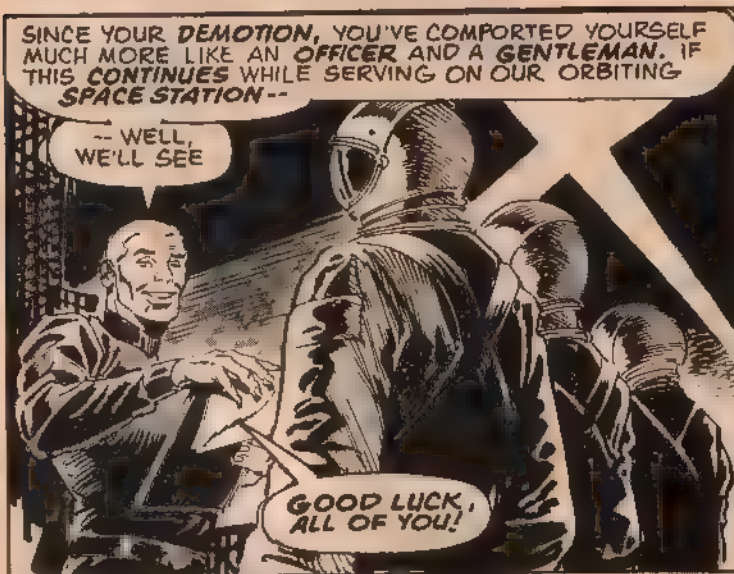
IT'S ALL BEEN FOR NOTHING! MY WHOLE LIFE-- FOR NOTHING!



NOTHING...!



NOVEMBER 23, 1989: CAPE CANAVERAL.



JANUARY 26, 1990: EARTH-STATION EVE.

IN THE TWO MONTHS SINCE PETER QUILL ARRIVED HERE, 204 MILES ABOVE HIS NATIVE WORLD, HE DISCOVERED PEACE. IN MANY WAYS, WAS A CHILD AGAIN.

IN MANY WAYS, THE PAIN AND ANGER OF THE PAST SIXTEEN YEARS NOW SEEMED A NIGHTMARE.

...A NIGHTMARE THAT HAD DIED WITH THIS NEW DAWN!

THE STARS-- SO BEAUTIFUL!

THIS IS WHERE IT ALL IS: OUT HERE! NOT DOWN THERE ON THAT "MORTAL COIL"! WE'RE JUST SPECKS-- AND THIS IS --

--EVERYTHING!

CAP'N SAID THERE'S GOING TO BE AN ECLIPSE TONIGHT. WE'LL HAVE A GOOD VIEW--!

HEY, QUILL! SEEN ANY YOU-FOES LATELY?

NOT A ONE...sk... ROBBIE!

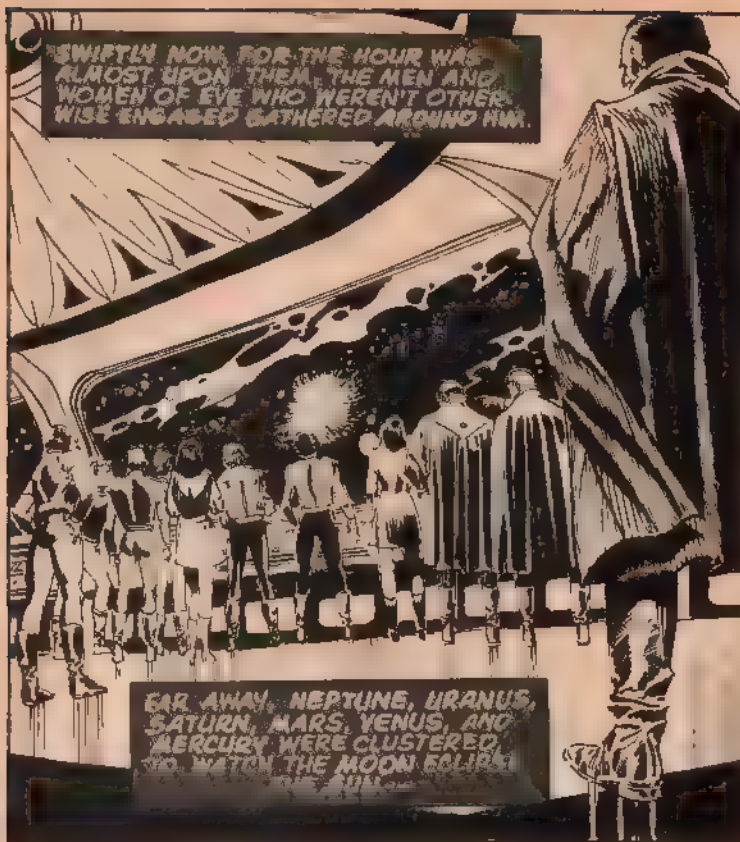
WHAT'S THIS ABOUT A UFO, ROBBIE?

Aww, HE TOLD ME AT MESS LAST NIGHT.

SEEMS HE SAW A FLYING SAUCER AS A KID! THAT'S WHY HE BECAME AN ASTRO!

ME-- I JUST DUG STAR TREK!

ONCE, HE MIGHT HAVE TURNED AWAY FROM SUCH REMARKS. NOW, HE JUST SMILED.



SWIFTLY NOW, FOR THE HOUR WAS ALMOST UPON THEM, THE MEN AND WOMEN OF EVE WHO WEREN'T OTHER, WISE ENGAGED GATHERED AROUND HIM.

EAR AWAY, NEPTUNE, URANUS, SATURN, MARS, VENUS, AND MERCURY WERE CLUSTERED TO WATCH THE MOON ECLIPSE THE SUN.



AND SCANT SECONDS BEFORE IT DID, EVE'S MOON MOVED INTO PLACE.

THE CREW HELD ITS BREATH, AND READIED ITSELF.

--AND THEN, INCREDIBLY--

I BID YOU GREETINGS, TERRANS!

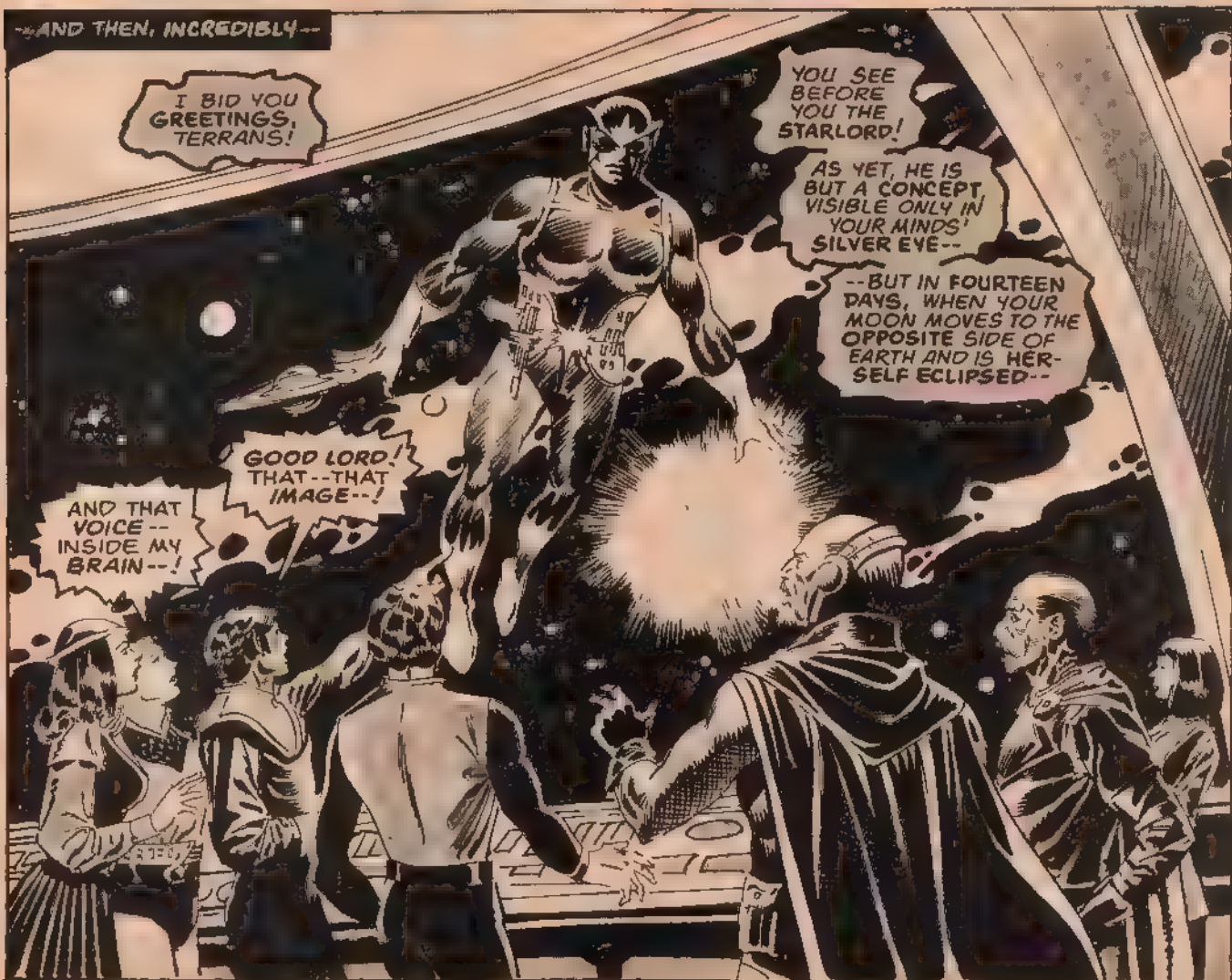
YOU SEE BEFORE YOU THE STARLORD!

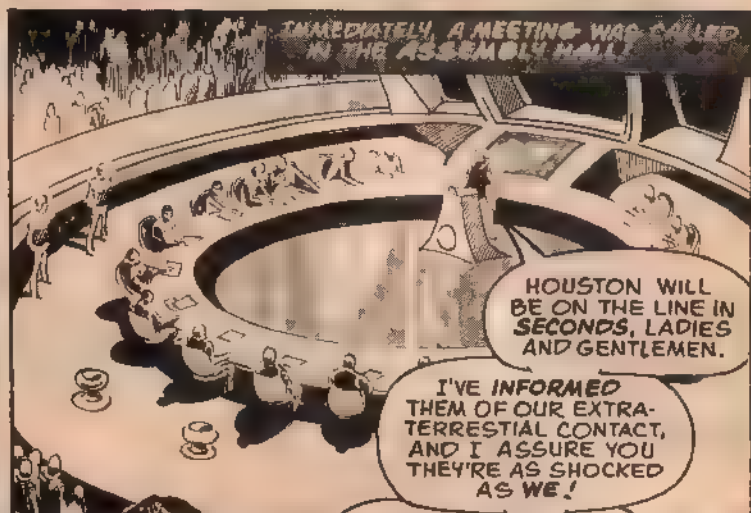
AS YET, HE IS BUT A CONCEPT, VISIBLE ONLY IN YOUR MINDS! SILVER EYE--

--BUT IN FOURTEEN DAYS, WHEN YOUR MOON MOVES TO THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF EARTH AND IS HERSELF ECLIPSED--

GOOD LORD! THAT--THAT IMAGE--!

AND THAT VOICE-- INSIDE MY BRAIN--!





KARATE

KUNG-FU • JUDO • JIU-JITSU • SAVATE
AIKIDO • TAE-KWON-DO

THE TOTAL SELF-DEFENSE SYSTEM

In the shortest time you can learn the fantastic techniques of self-defense and you'll never be afraid again! This unique Home Course will reveal numerous fighting methods that you can put to immediate use. Easy and exciting to learn, you'll be able to master any difficult situation. In only a short while, the knowledge of the World's Top Fighting Experts can be Yours!!

Regardless of your age, you can master this **TOTAL SELF-DEFENSE SYSTEM!** It doesn't require muscles or size to be a **MASTER** at self-defense, but it does require **KNOW-HOW!!** The knowledge of Karate has enabled small, slight men to successfully and completely protect themselves from men twice their size; in just seconds the Karate Master can completely immobilize any attacker — destroying him!

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A NEW YOU!

EVERYONE ADMIRES AND RESPECTS A KARATE MASTER!

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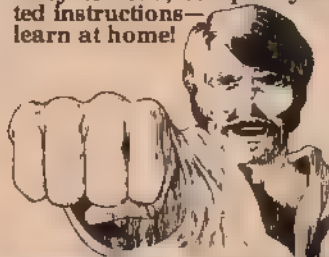
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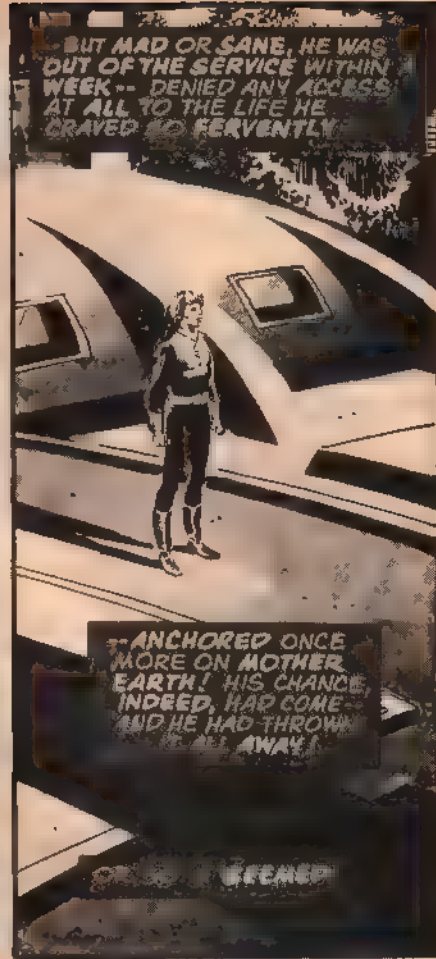
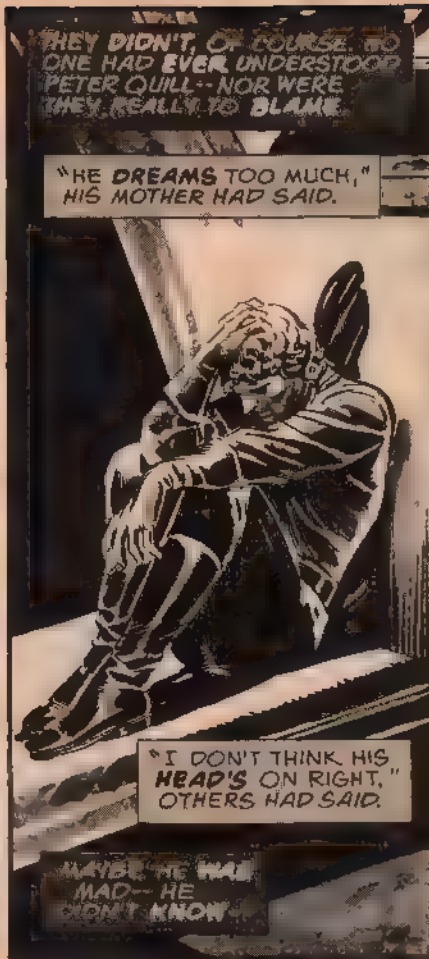


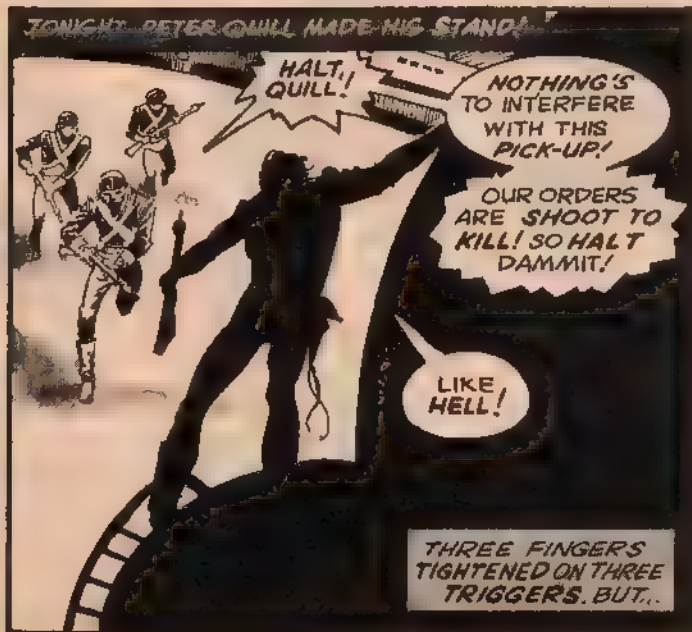
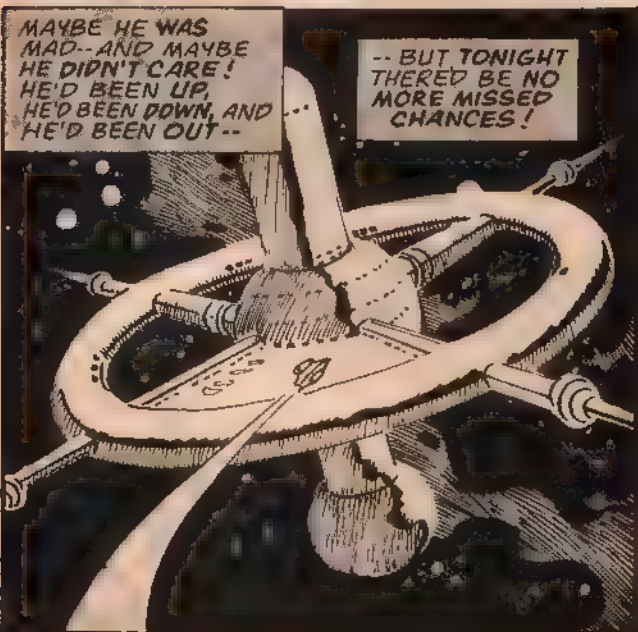
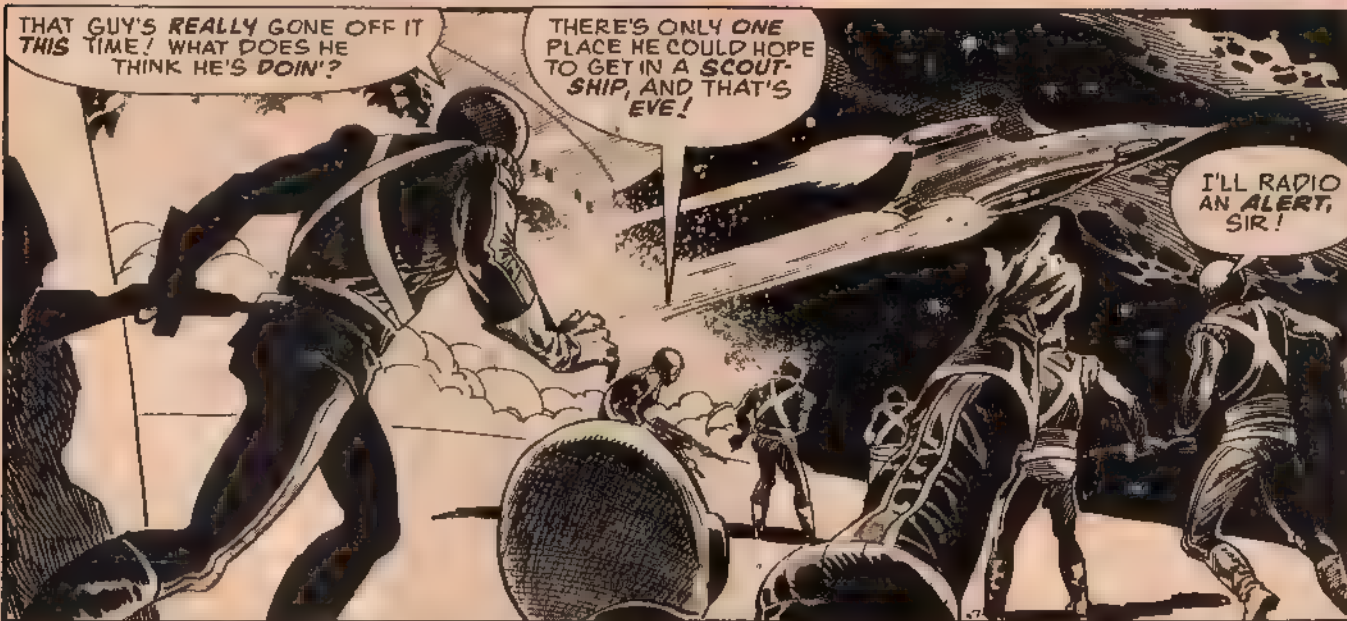
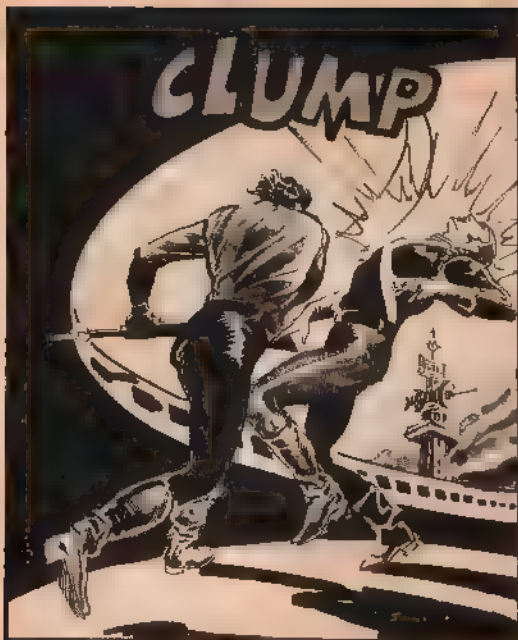
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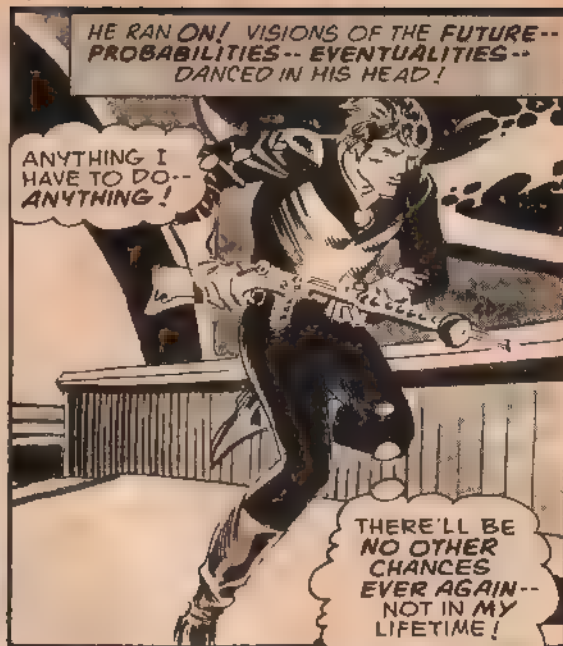




...THE MOST PROFICIENT
ASTRONAUT EVER
TESTED WAS A CRACK
SHOT! HE PUT HIS
LASERIFLE'S BLASTS
WHERE HE
WANTED THEM!

KSSST

HEAT AND
NEARLY
NOISE
LESS



HE RAN ON! VISIONS OF THE FUTURE--
PROBABILITIES-- EVENTUALITIES--
DANCED IN HIS HEAD!

ANYTHING I
HAVE TO DO--
ANYTHING!

THERE'LL BE
NO OTHER
CHANCES
EVER AGAIN--
NOT IN MY
LIFETIME!



THIS IS
FANTASY
COME TRUE!

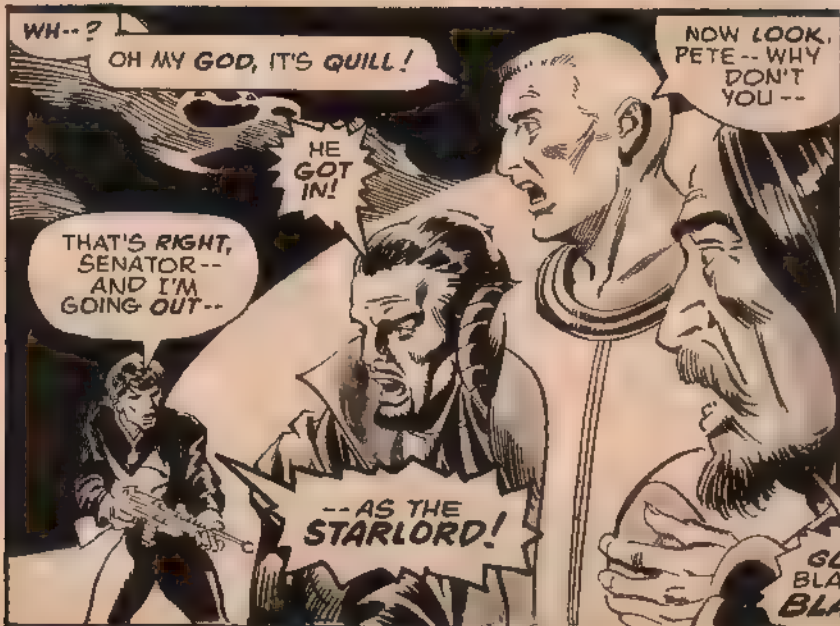
THIS IS MY
NIGHT!

...WHAT YOU'LL FIND OUT THERE, GREG?

SOMETHING TO BRING ABOUT
PEACE ON EARTH, I HOPE,
SENATOR.

WE'VE WAITED A
LONG TIME FOR
CONTACT WITH
ANOTHER
PLANET---

JESUS!



WH--?

OH MY GOD, IT'S QUILL!

HE
GOT
IN!

THAT'S RIGHT,
SENATOR--
AND I'M
GOING OUT--

--AS THE
STARLORD!

NOW LOOK,
PETE-- WHY
DON'T
YOU --

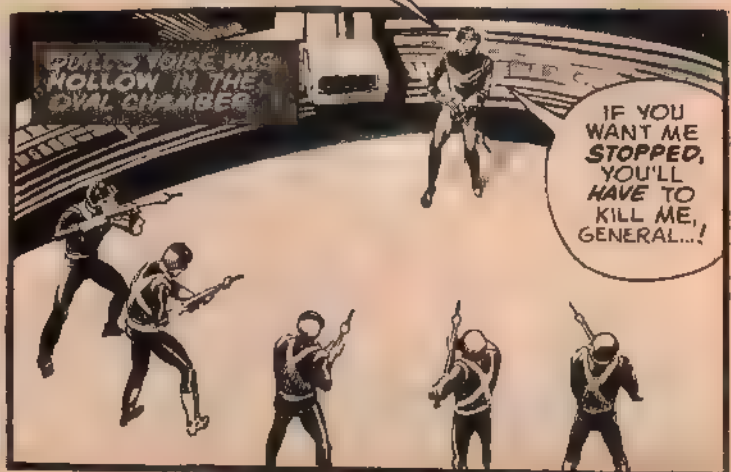


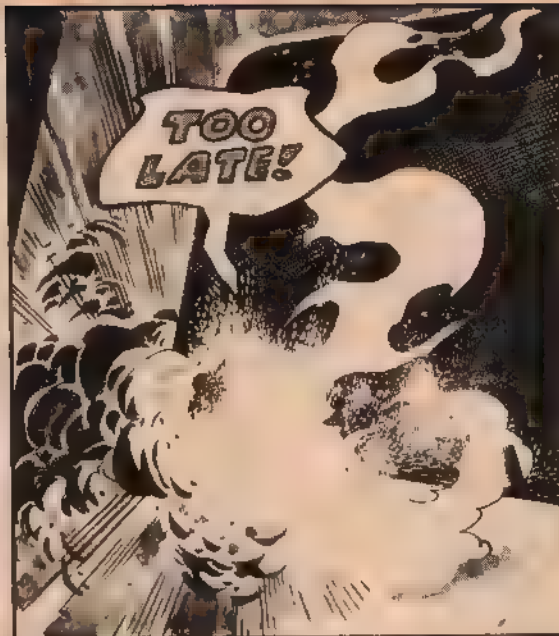
SO NOW IT'S PETE, HUH?
FOR THE FIRST TIME
EVER, IT'S PETE!

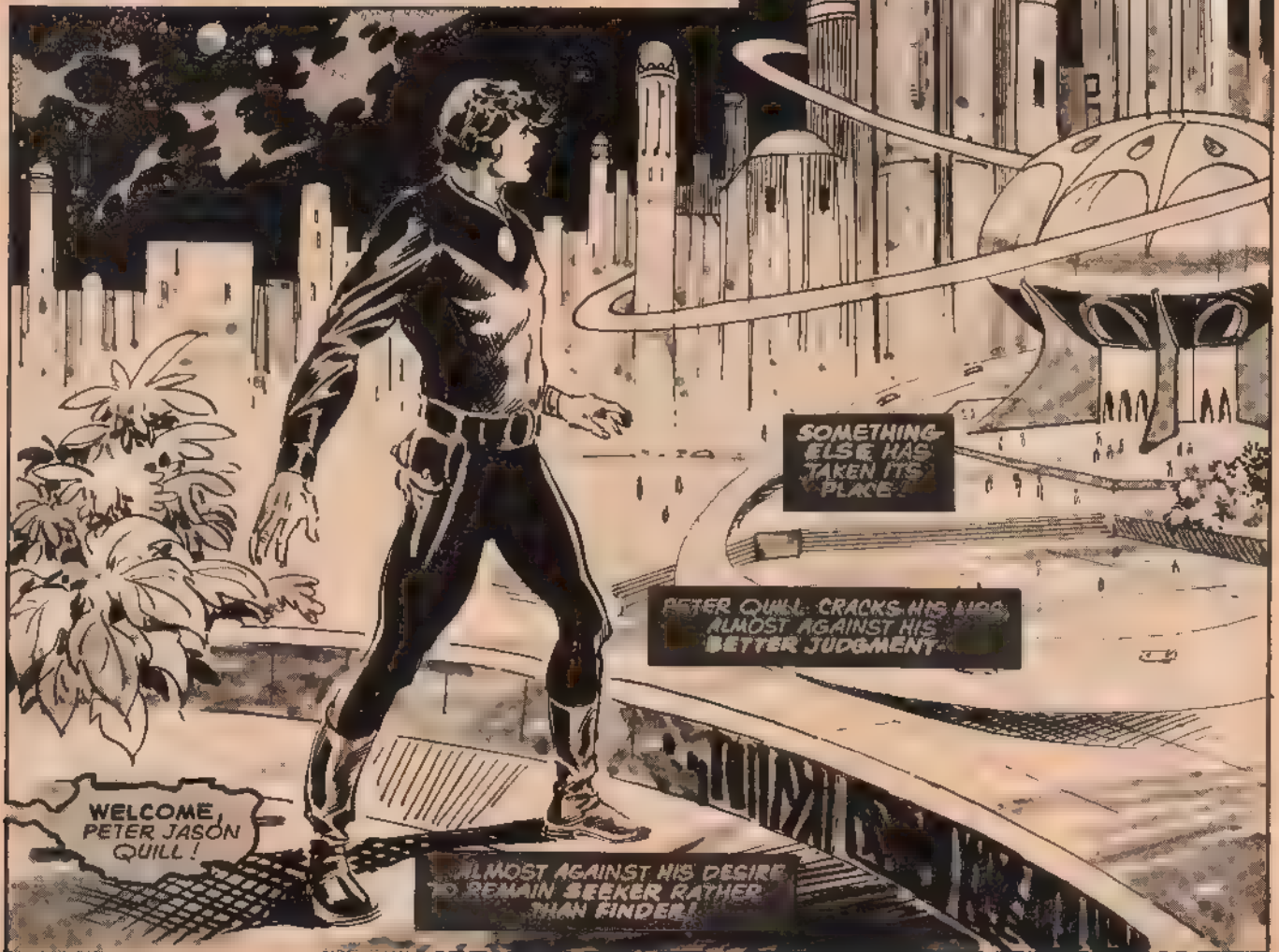
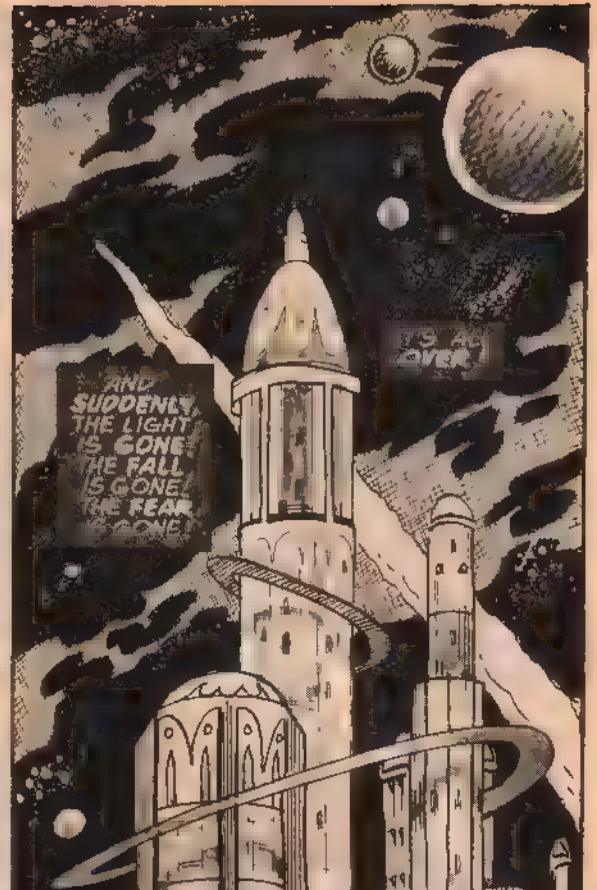
GUARDS!
BLAST HIM--
BLAST HIM!

YOU --
LOUSY --

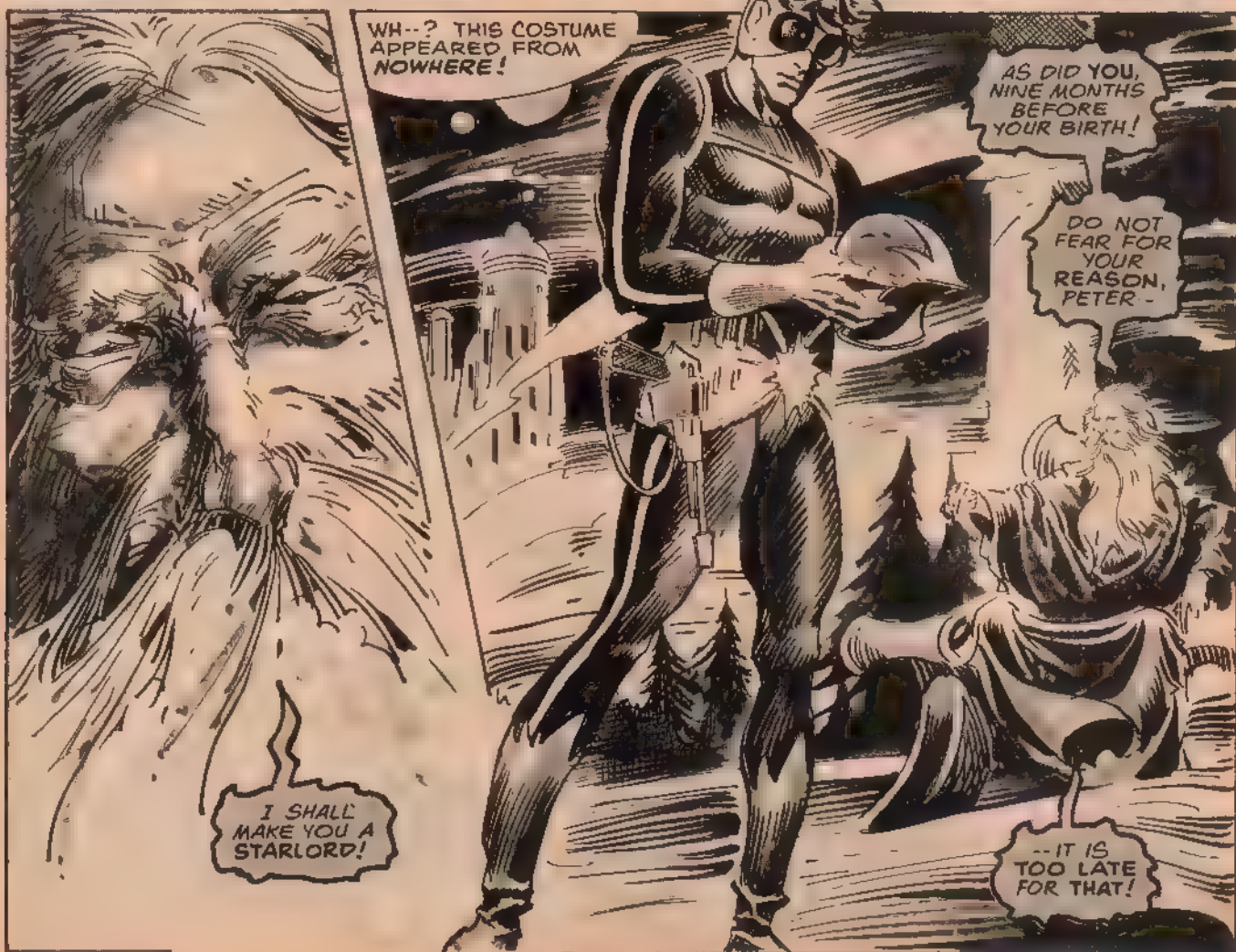
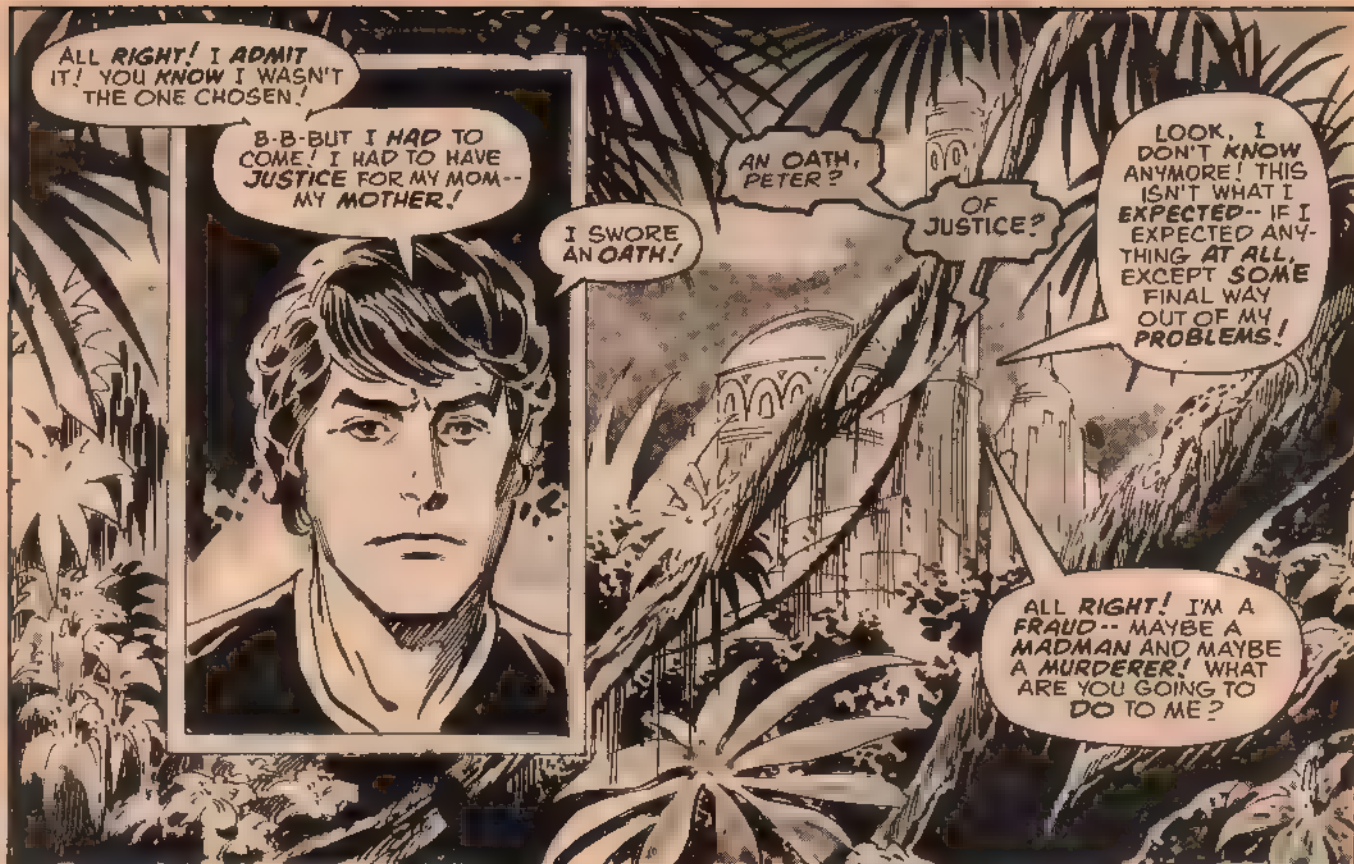












BUT WHAT'S IT ALL FOR? AM I SUPPOSED TO BE A LENSMAN, OR A PERRY RHODAN?

WHAT IS A STARLORD?

DON YOUR HELMET! COMPLETE YOURSELF.

EVERY NERVE IN HIS BODY JANGLING, EVERY MUSCLE AQUIVER, PETER QUILL LOOKS LONG AND HARD AT THE STRANGE AND STRANGE-ER FAMILIAR HEADPIECE.

—THEN ABRUPTLY AS IF AFRAID TO THINK FURTHER, HE CLAPS IT UPON HIS BROW.

IMMEDIATELY HE KNOWS...

I CAN FLY!

I DON'T KNOW HOW, BUT I'M FLYING--

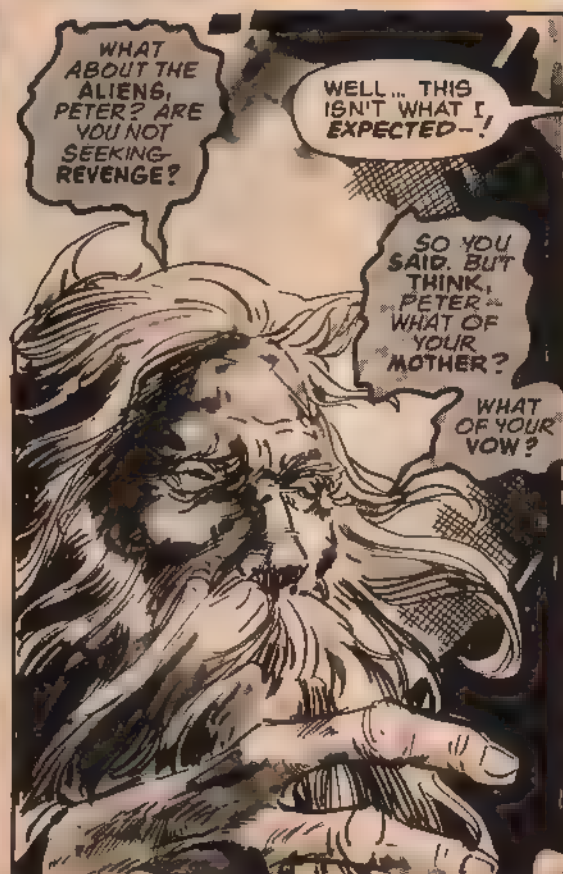
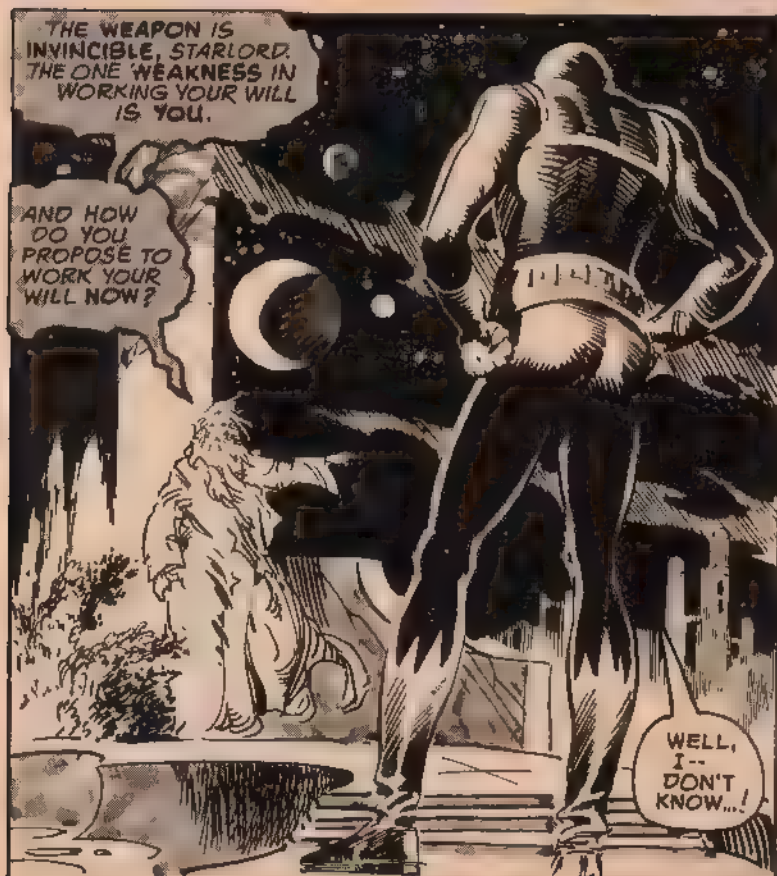
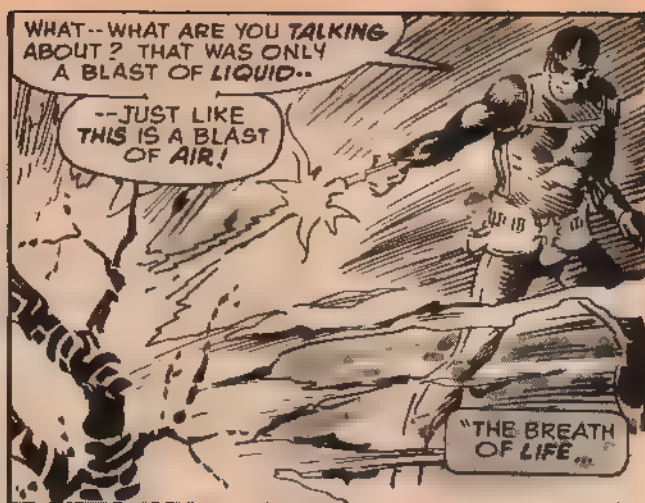
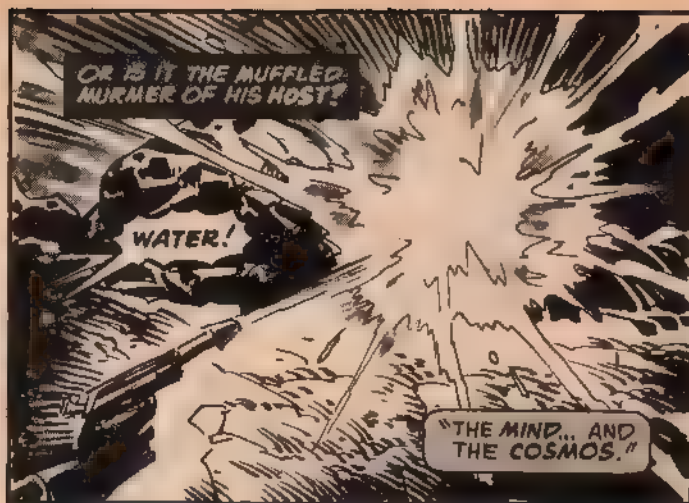
--LIKE A BIRD-- A HAWK!

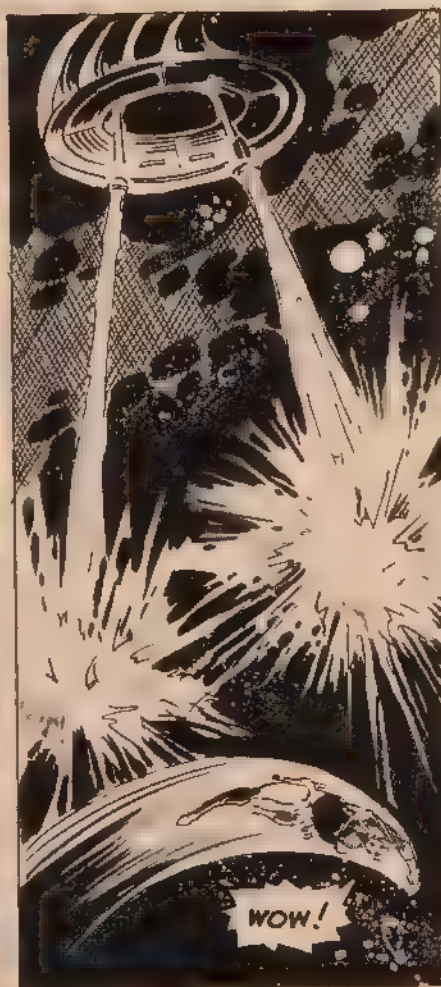
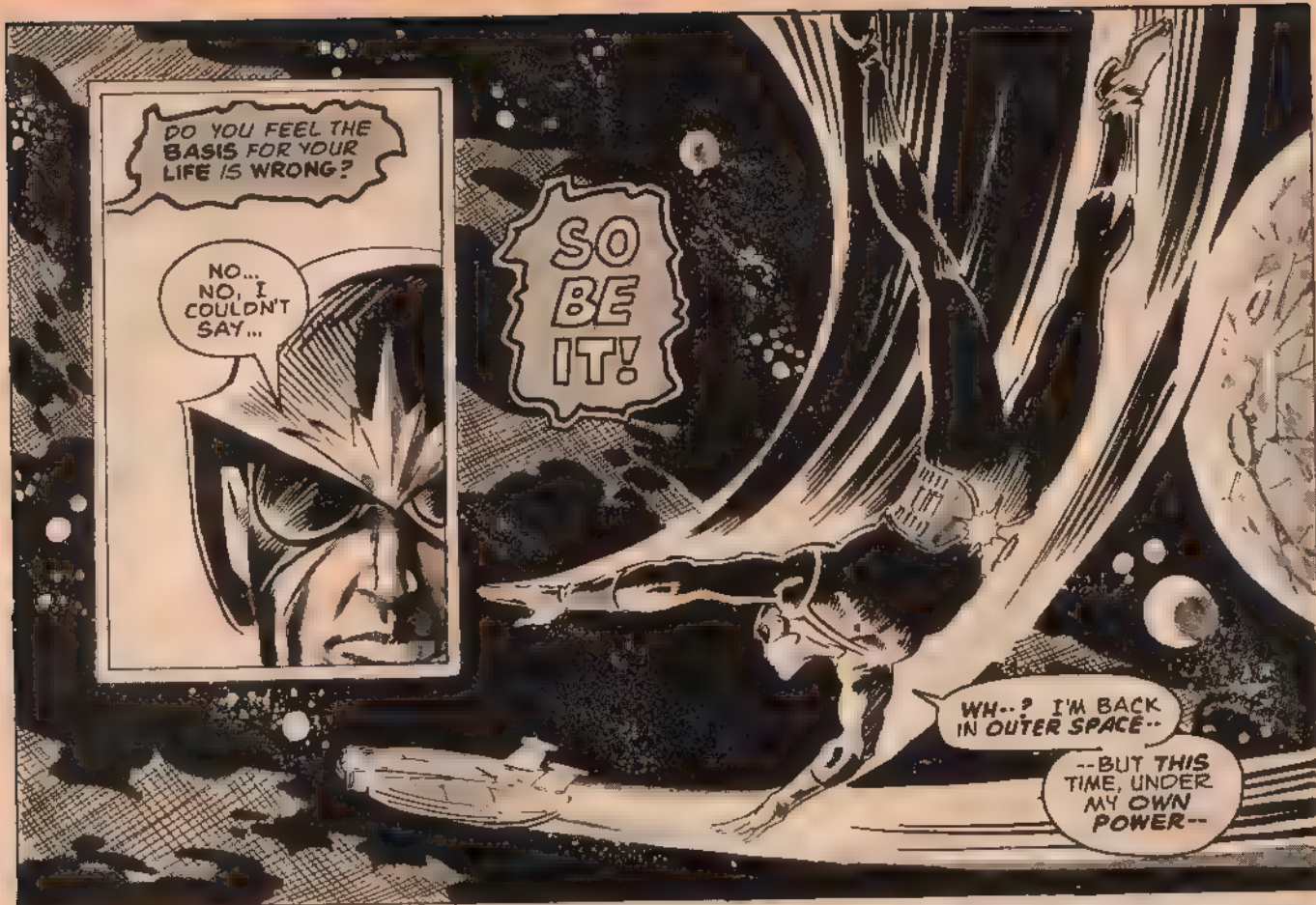
AND THIS GUN--!

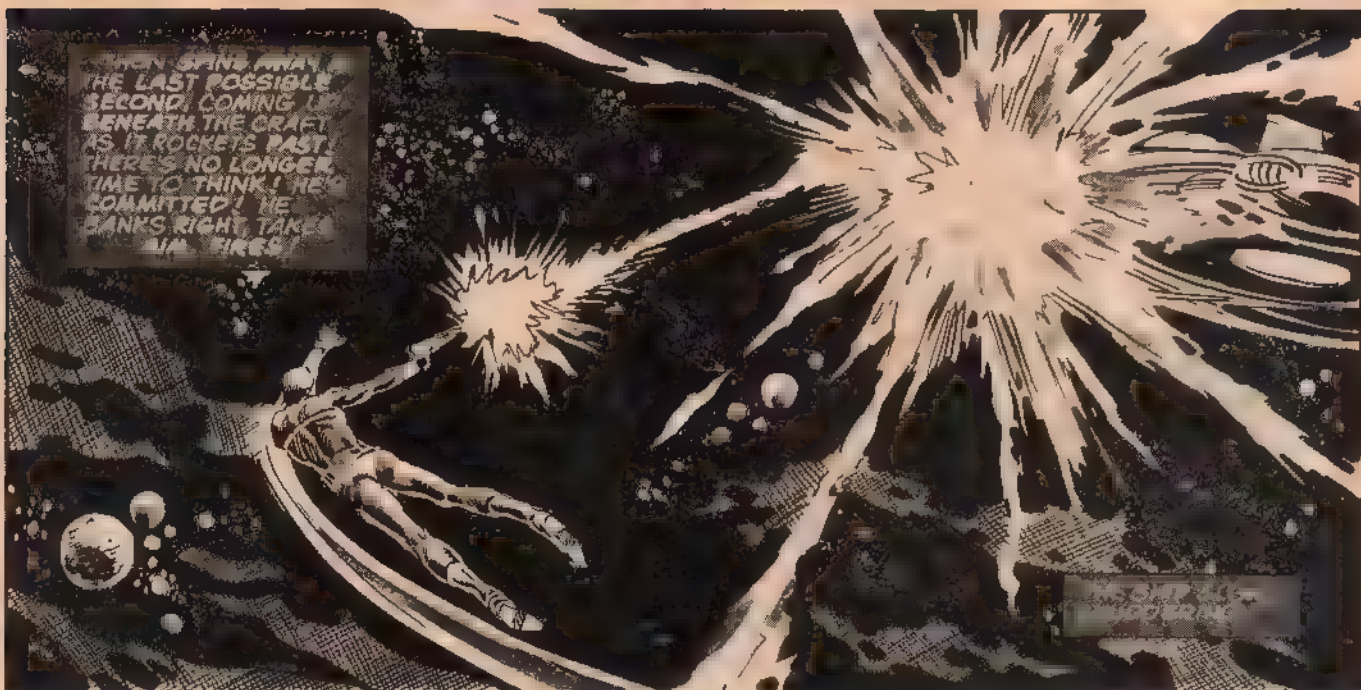
-- ALL I HAVE TO DO IS DECIDE, AND IT SHOOTS --

--FIRE!

"THE UNIVERSAL RADIANT ENERGY," WHISPERS HIS HELMET, HOLLOWLY.











THEY'RE DEAD!
ALL OF 'EM --
DEAD!!



AND SO YOU HAVE
FULFILLED YOUR
VOW, PETER QUILL!

WHAT
HAPPENED?
HOW DID I
GET BACK
HERE?

UNLESS --
I NEVER
LEFT AT
ALL!

BE THAT AS IT
MAY, YOU
EXPERIENCED
YOUR
VENGEANCE...

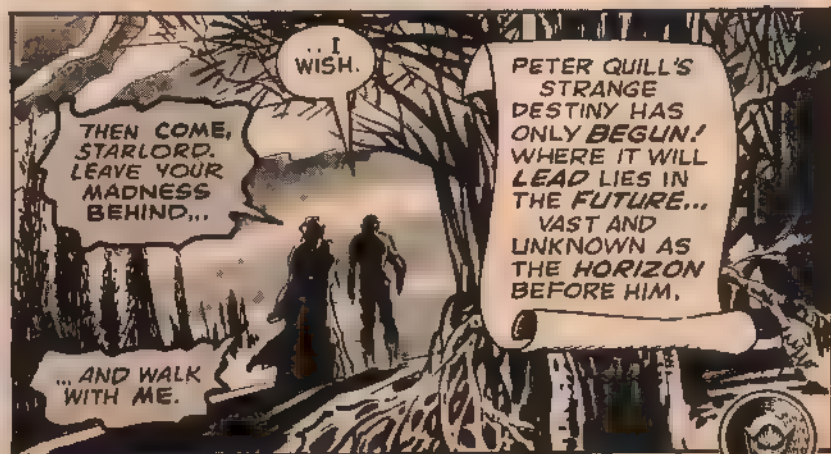


...AND NOW
YOU ARE FREE
OF YOUR
PAST LIFE...

...FREE
TO FORM
A NEW
LIFE...

...IF YOU
WISH!

I...



... I
WISH.

THEN COME,
STARLORD.
LEAVE YOUR
MADNESS
BEHIND...

PETER QUILL'S
DESTINY HAS
ONLY **BEGUN!**
WHERE IT WILL
LEAD LIES IN
THE **FUTURE...**
VAST AND
UNKNOWN AS
THE **HORIZON**
BEFORE HIM,

... AND WALK
WITH ME.



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ART: KEITH GIFFEN & BOB MCLEOD

Sword In The Star

by Edward S. Barkan and Bill Mantlo

To begin with, we've been asked to say something—some few and simple words about the story you are all about to read. Because this story deals with certain aspects of ancient cultures, their legends and myths, and, because much of **THE SWORD IN THE STAR** is based on certain ancient stories, primarily the epics of Homer, it was thought that a little background on these myths and legends might serve to give the reader a better understanding of the tale, as well as refer him to some of the important parallels in historical/

fictional literature.

It's not a difficult task to show how many tales in the modern world, labeled fantasy (some of which are counted among the great works of fiction) have their roots somewhere in the past—in the myths or semi-historical traditions of the ancient Greeks. What modern authors do, basically, is alter the shapes of the primal symbols of their ancient sources to fit the world view of their own particular culture. This had been done even in ancient times. So we see that Virgil's *Aeneid* is

only a "Romanized" reshaping of Homer's *Odyssey*, written to fit the world view of Rome. This was also the basic formula which James Joyce used in constructing his modern *ULYSSES*. Joyce retained the skeletal structure of Homer, reshaping the symbols to fit his modern world view, while Nikos Kazantzakis extended the same theme of the *Odyssey* beyond the structural limits of Homer when he wrote his *MODERN SEQUEL*. Yet, Kazantzakis retained Homer's imagery throughout.

It is Homer, then, and the Ulyssean legends that become our basic subject of comparison. *The Sword* does refer to the Aeneid, the Camelot myths, modern Delphinology, Genetics and on and on, ad infinitum but it remains that **THE SWORD IN THE STAR** has borrowed more from the legends of Ulysses than from any or ALL of the others. We have delved deeply into what is known about the Ulysean world to give our tale a flavor similar to the one that has captivated audiences for more than three thousand years. What we have borrowed, most importantly, is the Odyssey's fundamental quality - The spirit of searching and adventure and the *struggle* that is inherent in that spirit. **THE SWORD IN THE STAR**, like the Odyssey, tells of a man's quest for his place in the universe, his journey toward self-realization. This theme is broad and raises several important points.

What we can define as being most basic to both is that each tale shares the tradition of the *epic*. That's a word we'll be using quite freely, a word which conjures up countless images and just as many misconceptions. So just *what* is an *Epic*?

The epic can simply be defined as an extended narrative, either a long poem (usually divided into shorter books), or a long work of prose which celebrates a people's heroic tradition - either of which is easily and joyfully adapted to the comic medium. The epic also celebrates an individual's heroic struggle. Often these two concepts, that of society and the individual, are an interchangeable symbolism; so that the hero Ulysses becomes the hero of Greek society, and his exploits are no longer those of one man, but of the race. They become representative of all people, and they become, finally, representative of mankind's struggle for freedom. In epic and heroic literature *the lone man*, more often than not, represents the struggle of *all mankind*.

Wayfinder exemplified this tradition, in which the individual struggles as the spirit of mankind toward growth and full identity. He struggles against a hostile world in much the same way as does Telemachos, Ulysses son, when he set himself against the suitors who laid waste to his house and siege to his mother while his father was absent. Much can be added, but it would take another and far longer piece just to begin such a task. Suffice to say, the elements within the epic that deal either from a standpoint of society, or from the point of the individual are an inter-

changeable symbolism.

An example of the epic in eastern tradition is the Mahabharata. Considered the longest epic poem ever written (eighteen books long and about ninety-five thousand, five hundred and eight-six stanzas), it is concerned with the great conflict among the descendants of the hero Bharata. One might note that the foundation of our own western culture is grounded in an eastern oral tradition which is epic in its structure: the Old Testament of the Bible. The Bible shares in the epic tradition in that it shows the evolutionary struggle of *a people* and its *ideas*.

Because epics share the same common concepts, if we were to set the Illiad, the Odyssey, the Aeneid, Old Testament and Mahabharata side by side and place **THE SWORD IN THE STAR** beside these, one would cer-



tainly come across endless similarities - yet each would have its own characteristic inflections that make it totally a part of its culture or an extrapolation thereof. The epic is not just broad in its *scope*. In most cases it deals *in depth* with the inner character of its participants. In *Wayfinder's* search, as in the search of his first and famous predecessor, Ulysses, we can find much of a deeply human element and, therefore, much of ourselves. As *Wayfinder* is represented, we can experience the entire gamut of his emotions. We share in his constant struggle and are filled with his joy, sorrow, anxiousness, desperation. This struggle moves toward a distant final goal, preceded by lesser goals which mark the stages of growth. The victories are brief and often bitter, and the failures are what failure must always be - *hard!* This is a circle of growth.

We can empathize with the hero on his level and it is this empathy we feel which involves us so deeply in his story. His struggle is of a much greater physical dimension than our own (people do not usually walk out of their apartments to confront dragons or a cyclops), but the heroes of epic fantasy have such privileges. Yet, although the situations seem so much more fantastic than the ones offered in our mundane existences, the heroes responses remain none-the-less human. They are the same as our own.

Mythological worlds, worlds of fantasy, are filled with things which cannot be experienced or observed firsthand by us while we are in the waking world. Therefore, we are bound to fall in love with the fantasy of it all, gripped by the opportunity to experience the amazing, the incredible, the fantastic, or merely the different. Where else but in the work of fantasy (outside of our dreams) can one find heaven or hell, wizards and witches or monsters of every imaginable description; and it is only in the world of fantasy that we can confront these images perhaps reasserting our own reality. We see them through the eyes of the characters in these stories and their battles and quests become real.

Within the enormous borders of our imaginations, where epic and fantasy reside with the world of dreams, we are given more than the opportunity to observe. Imagination meshes with our own experience. The total effect is that the story entraps us and entrances us. For awhile, we live within that epic world.

Virgil was probably the first author of note to take Homer's themes and adapt them to his culture. His use of the myth was quite similar to the formula of the following story. The Aeneid is the other side of the coin in the Trojan struggle. Where, in the Illiad, the Greeks Triumph, in the Aeneid, Troy has been sacked and defeated in the ten year siege of the Argives, but the remnant of its people, led by the hero Aeneas, is able to escape and travel through the Mediterranean until, in the end, they found the culture which eventually flowers into Rome. This is willed by the king of their gods, Jupiter, who speaks of prophesy from the secret book of fate.

This is another case of prophesy being the springboard for epic struggle. *Wayfinder* also begins his quest in flight and upon the words of prophesy spoken by his dying father.

"... You will see with more than

your eyes. And the sword you bear in blistered hands will glow with the fires of the stars . . ."

Wayfinder, by the word of prophesy, is not simply allowed to forfeit his life into the hands of the conquering Haamin, as he himself would choose, because somewhere there exists a sword in a star; a power carefully hidden by a long dead science. It is a power so great that it could very well shake the foundations of the galaxy.

It is in the hope of finding this power, that no foe could withstand, that Wayfinder, whether through motives

word of mouth or in the written word. Still, among the borrowings, whether conscious or unconscious, you will see many twists and turns of the author's own imagination. These will expand the symbols of the Odyssey, and will turn them to embrace the technology of the far distant future which comprises Wayfinder's world.

It is easily noticeable that there are differences in character between Ulysses and Wayfinder. But the reader must take into account the fact that Homer and the culture he was a part of had only a bronze-age world-view. Homer's im-

place is as alien to us as we might seem, perhaps, to the ancient Greeks. Among other things, the fields of Genetics, Biology and Physics have all become mystic arts. They have collectively reshaped the human race.

We think it would serve to try and give you a picture of this type of diverse humanity. We could picture a scale, at which we would find upon the one end, Wayfinder's people. They have remained relatively unchanged, untouched by these new arts. As we move toward the center of the scale, we find that there have developed cultures with various degrees of specialization, such as flight or ability to survive in an airless existence.

Each form had adapted to a particular eco-system. Still farther out, perhaps at the very opposite end of the scale, are the Haamin, a race of men who have changed nearly beyond human cognizance. Each branch on this tree of humanity has developed a culture of varying complexity, based upon an ecological specialization, and yet each branch of this human tree remains definitely *HUMAN*.

It is upon this stage that Wayfinder begins his search for the sword, with only a vague prophesy to follow through the heavens. The planets and places which this unseasoned traveler must visit will at first be strange, sometimes wonderful, sometimes terrifying. He will meet friend and foe, and will occasionally be unable to tell one from the other—but upon each new step, Wayfinder will begin to grow. His quest for *THE SWORD IN THE STAR* will become an education—a baptism of fire. This is the way it must be, so that when he achieves his final goal it will not be an arrogant prince who holds the most awesome weapon in the cosmos, but a man filled with the wisdom of history—a wisdom that was well earned. "The gods have other paths for you to walk," said the dying king of Ithicon, his father. "...You will see with more than your eyes . . . and the sword you bear in blistered hands will glow with the fires of the stars!"

If it was prophesy which set the stage for the epic adventures of Ulysses and Aeneas, the one above sets the stage for the fantastic adventures of Wayfinder. His quest will be filled with glory and wonder, just as the quests of his predecessors. But they were bound by the world of their ancient time. Wayfinders shores are unbounded and he is racing through a galaxy where *somewhere* waits *THE SWORD IN THE STAR*!



of vengeance or a truly idealistic motive of hope in an eventual reclamation of his heritage, allows himself to be removed from the Armageddon of Ithicon. Later he is shown a vision of man's history, stripped of the distorted images that have resulted in more than fifteen thousand years of human expansion outward and an inward growing psychic isolation throughout the galaxy. Wayfinder begins to understand the true purpose of the prophesy and, at this point, his real growth begins. For, although he has been trained all his life to battle, that training will be of little use in dealing with the more intangible problems of manhood; responsibility perhaps, even courage! To be able to deal with a power such as the *Sword*, Wayfinder must gradually realize that he has to change the *person* that is in himself. *The Wielder Must Be Worthy Of The Weapons!*

The writer's craft is, to a degree, to borrow from all experience, whether that experience is from another's life in

agination, therefore, spawned tales from these primitive mythological concepts, filled with the beasts and demons which were at the conceptual limits of their isolated universe. The world-view of Wayfinder is much the same, yet modern man's understanding of the universe has allowed us to borrow from Homer's basic outline, while expanding the world-view to fit the limits of the modern imagination.

Hence, we encounter a galaxy of countless diverse mankinds, some of them literally as *powerful as Olympian Gods*, humankinds which seem to be something other than human, though the ancestry of all have sprung from the same *Human* source. Wayfinder's terrors are far deadlier than anything Ulysses faced in his quest, and so are his delights. They have been enlarged in their proportions by the strange sciences of a galactic culture which is pictured to exist more than fifteen hundred centuries in our future.

The time in which this tale takes



**"I hate to exercise
and I hate to diet
but I lost 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches
off my waistline...
13 lbs. and shaped up
in only 14 days!"**

One simple 5 minute
(average) exercise,
twice daily, while lying on my
back, eating about 20% less,
but without giving up
the foods I love...
DID IT!

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STRONGER LEGS**
Builds legs, firms and
tonifies them.

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CHEST SIZE**
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and helps build an
athletic chest.

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drive power.

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"I saw and felt results in the first 3 days."

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Using this ingenious 5 Minute Body Shaper Plan for just 14 days has you starting to lose inches and pounds, adding muscle and vigor. Use it in the privacy of your own home. It has been used by athletes, businessmen, anyone wanting that muscular athletic look fast. It's safe. Medically Approved and Guaranteed!

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2. Simple to Use, No disrobing. Attach it to any door knob, stretch out comfortably on the floor. Do one 5' Minute continuous, rhythmic, enjoyable exercise twice daily, whenever you have the time, even while watching TV.
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4. No Rigid Dieting. We suggest you temporarily eat 20% less until you reach your normal weight, without giving up any of the foods you love—eat Ice Cream, Cakes, Pasta, whatever! (It's all in the guide!)
5. Safer and Saves Time. No more running to gyms for complicated exhausting workouts that can strain you. This simple 5' Minute Plan, that you do at home, leaves you refreshed.
6. Weighs Only 10 Ounces. Fits any wallet size case. Stores anywhere. Travels with you so you never have to miss a slimming session. Remember, it's the daily sessions that firm, shape and fashion you a more youthful looking figure. It's Fun With Results... "5" Minutes And Out.

THE SECRET WHY IT BEATS FASTING ALONE, MAKING YOUR FIGURE LOOK YEARS YOUNGER

Fasting programs, when causing weight loss, unlike our plan usually burn off more active tissue (muscles) which can cause your skin to wrinkle, muscles to sag and create dragging fatigue. Our Plan increases active tissue growth—through the use of the '5' Minute exerciser—while concentrating greater fat loss by (exercise and temporary

(PHOTOS CERTIFIED UNRETouched)



**Weight: 218 lbs.
Waist: 44 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.**

**Weight: 205 lbs.
Waist: 37 in.**

20 percent food reduction) making you look years younger as you slim. Within the first 5' minutes you use the exerciser, you start burning off fat, speeding up your metabolism to help burn up stored calories, releasing excess water. Helps curb your appetite without suppressants. Increases energy and well being. It's so simple and enjoyable a plan to follow, we guarantee you can stay with it remaining slim without re-gaining those inches and pounds. It can put an end to your "gain-and-loss-cycles."

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EXPERTS AND CUSTOMERS AGREE:

It's the no-nonsense way to shape up fast! Scientific reports and many of our 600,000 customers inform us that sauna wraps, inflated belts, weighted belts and other "effortless exercisers" are of little or no value in firming, shaping and beautifying your figure. "YOU MUST WORK OFF THE INCHES," experts say. We believe, and results prove our's is the simplest, safest, most enjoyable Plan to do it. We Guarantee It. Here's a sampling of what our slimming customers tell us that happened to them while using the Plan.

Name	Pounds Lost	Inches Lost (off waistline)	Time
G. C.	25 lbs.	5 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.	(14 days)
M. F.	32 lbs.	6 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.	(24 days)
W. E.	15 lbs.	3 in.	(14 days)
M. B.	22 lbs.	6 in.	(21 days)
C. J.	10 lbs.	6 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.	(14 days)
P. O.	10 lbs.	6 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.	(14 days)
J. C.	10 lbs.	5 in.	(14 days)

They were measured by experts before and after 14 days. The results verified some notarized. Your results may vary depending on how overweight you are and how much time you devote to the exerciser. The customers quoted spent 5 to 10 minutes twice daily and reduced their food intake—temporarily by about 20%, but none gave up the foods they love.

DO IT NOW! It's America's most successful figure shaper. 600,000 customers have purchased our '5 Minute Plan to slim down fast. Results are proven and some notarized. Our guarantee to you is in writing. Experts agree our plan works—and works fast. Now, can you think of any reason for not ordering your '5 Minute Body Shaper Plan and start slimming down today?

Satisfaction Guaranteed!

"Use our Improved '5' Minute Body Shaper Plan for 14 days! See what it can do for you! If it is not what we say it is, simply return it to us, in good condition, for your \$9.98 refund."

JOE WEIDER Dept. LT/K
Builder of Champions since 1926
21100 Erwin Street
Woodland Hills, CA 91364

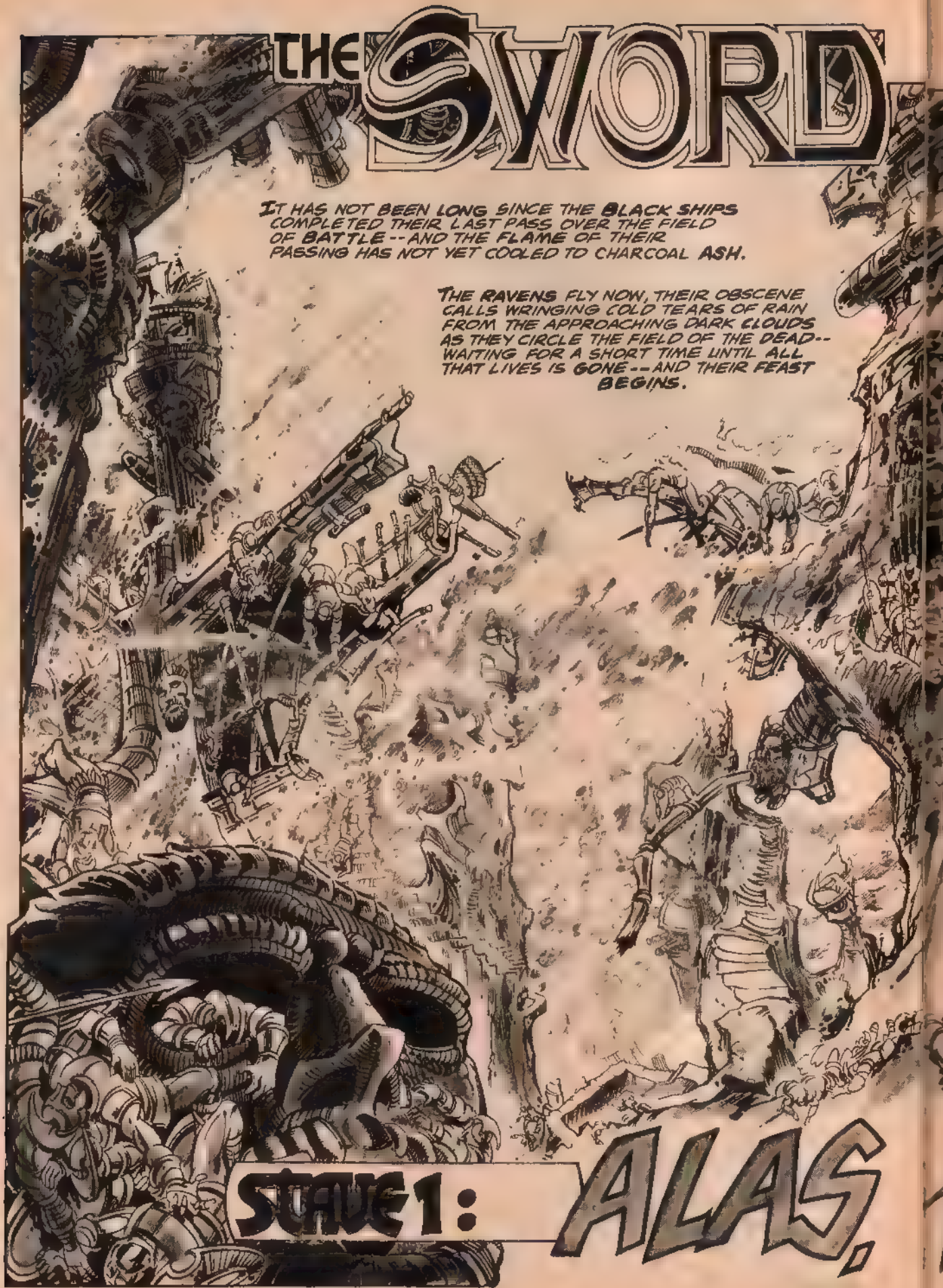
have a lot of pounds and inches to lose. You promise that I will feel more youthful and begin to look slimmer in just 3 days.

☐ I am enclosing \$9.98 plus \$1.00 for shipping and handling. (California res. add 6% sales tax.)

☐ Check ☐ Money Order ☐ Cash Please allow 3 to 4 weeks for delivery. Rush '5 Minute Body Shaper and Illustrated Guide to

Name _____ Age _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____

THE SWORD



IT HAS NOT BEEN LONG SINCE THE BLACK SHIPS
COMPLETED THEIR LAST PASS OVER THE FIELD
OF BATTLE -- AND THE FLAME OF THEIR
PASSING HAS NOT YET COOLED TO CHARCOAL ASH.

THE RAVENS FLY NOW, THEIR OBSCENE
CALLS WRINGING COLD TEARS OF RAIN
FROM THE APPROACHING DARK CLOUDS
AS THEY CIRCLE THE FIELD OF THE DEAD --
WAITING FOR A SHORT TIME UNTIL ALL
THAT LIVES IS GONE -- AND THEIR FEAST
BEGINS.

STAVE 1: **ALAS,**

in THE STARI!

THEIR CRIES FILL THE LIVING FEW WITH REVULSION-- FOR THEY KNOW THAT SOON THEIR FLAME-CHARRED BONES WILL LIE STRIPPED OF FLESH AND BLEACHING UPON THE WINDSWEEPED FIELD BESIDE THEIR SLAUGHTERED COMRADES -- BUT THE CIRCLE OF WARRIORS DOES NOT MOVE...

... AND THE CLOUDING EYES OF THEIR DYING KING ARE LIT WITH PRIDE FOR THESE MEN OF HIS-- THESE STALWART ITHACONS, WHO HAVE LIVED IN HONOR AND WILL DIE IN GLORY FOR THE SAKE OF THE HOME-WORLD AND THEIR LORD!

THE FLASH OF LASER-CANNONS LIGHT THE HORIZON, MILORD--

--IF THE SCEPTRE IS TO BE PASSED, TO YOUR SON, IT MUST BE DONE NOW!

HE SMILES THROUGH THE WAVES OF PAIN THAT WRACK HIS BODY-- HIS BLOOD STAINING CRIMSON THE SPARSE GRASS OF THE HILLTOP WHERE HE HAS COMMANDED HIS MEN TO SET HIM DOWN...

...AND HE SMILES AGAIN AT HIS SON-- THE YOUNG PRINCE-- HE WHO IS CALLED THE WAYFINDER-- AND HE KNOWS IT IS TIME TO DIE!

The SEEDS of MAN!



HE SMILES, THIS KING, DESPITE THE FIRE IN HIS SIDE, WHERE THE HAAMIN WAR-HEAD HAD COME HOME TO ROOST, EXPLODING WITHIN HIM AND TEARING HIS ORGANS TO PIECES.

AND HE TRIES HARD TO HOLD IN THE BLOOD THAT WELLS UP IN HIS MOUTH... STRIVING NOT TO COUGH IT OUT AND SHAME HIS SON OR HIMSELF.

HERE IS YOUR BLADE, MY LORD! IT IS RED WITH THE BLOOD OF THOSE YOU SLEW! LOUD WILL BE THE WAILING OF THE WOMEN ON THE HAAMIN HOME-WORLD THIS NIGHT!

WHERE IS MY SWORD? GODS BUT I DO FEEL STRIPPED WITHOUT IT!



AH, WAYFINDER, MY SON-- YOU DO EVER DELIGHT IN THE METAPHORS OF BATTLE!



I FIND JOY IN WHAT I WAS TRAINED TO DO FROM BIRTH. MY FATHER-- AND IT WAS YOU WHO DID TRAIN ME.

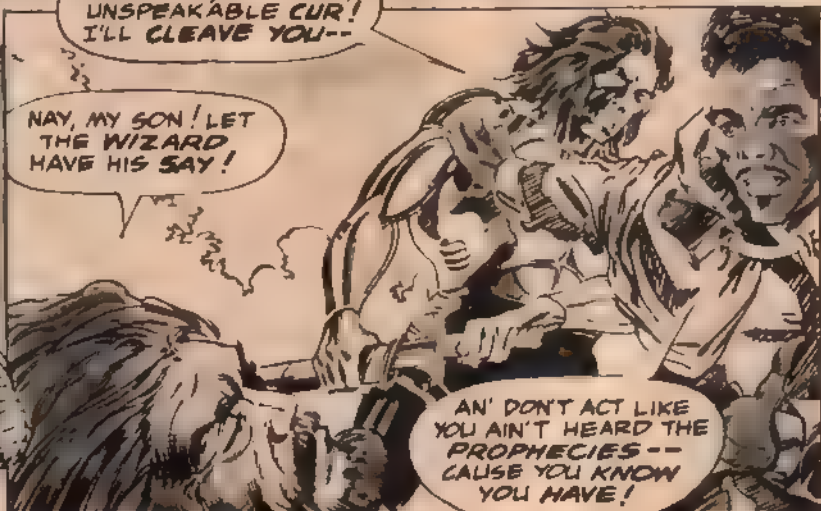
WHOO-EEE! YOU FOLKS CAN SURE TALK UP A STREAK WHEN YOU GET STARTED!

NOW HOWS ABOUT CANNIN' THE GAB AN' GETTIN' ON DOWN TO BUSINESS? YOU'RE DYIN', KING OLD BUDDY--

DELPHOS, YOU FOUL, UNSPEAKABLE CUR! I'LL CLEAVE YOU--

NAY, MY SON! LET THE WIZARD HAVE HIS SAY!

I DO BUT FOLLOW HAPPILY ON THE PATH MY PARENT CHOSE FOR ME!



AN' DON'T ACT LIKE YOU AIN'T HEARD THE PROPHECIES -- CAUSE YOU KNOW YOU HAVE!



YOU HESITATE, FATHER? CAN IT BE THIS DOG HAS FERRETED OUT SOME ANCIENT TRUTH YOU HAVE WITHHELD FROM ME? FATHER--?

WAYFINDER-- MY SON--!

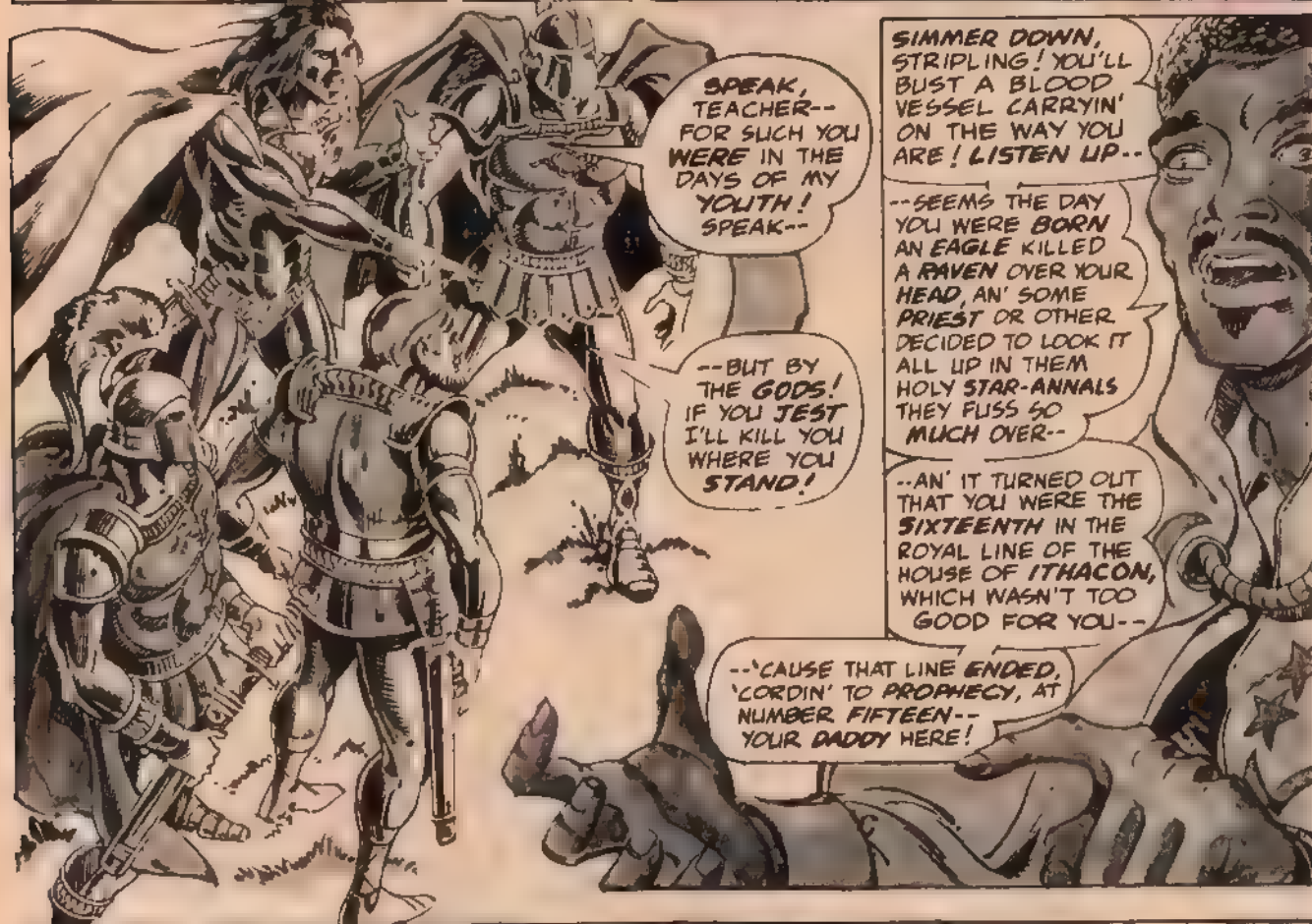


FATHER!



HE CAN'T TELL YOU, PRINCELING! ONLY A PRIEST--OR A WIZARD--IS ALLOWED TO SPOUT PROPHECY!

WANT TO HEAR THE ONE ABOUT YOU?



SPEAK, TEACHER--FOR SUCH YOU WERE IN THE DAYS OF MY YOUTH! SPEAK--

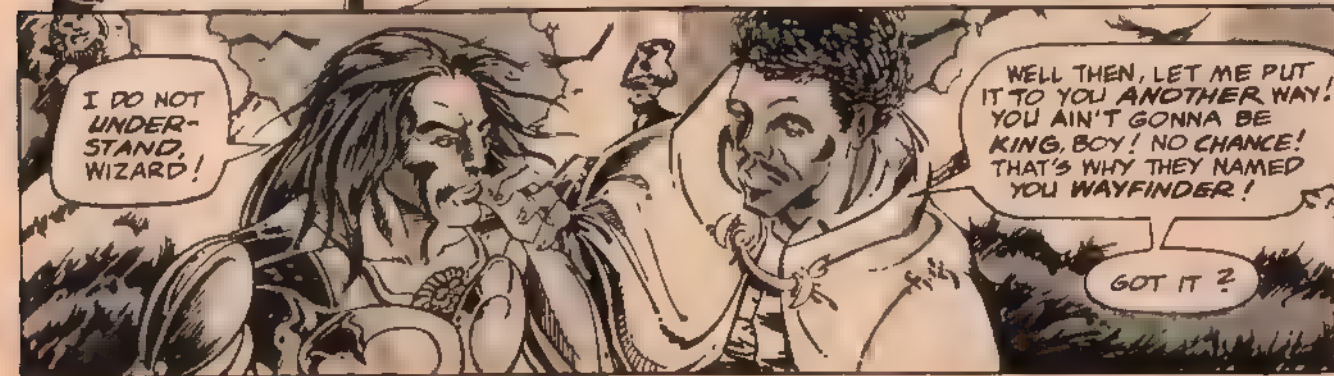
--BUT BY THE GODS! IF YOU JEST I'LL KILL YOU WHERE YOU STAND!

SIMMER DOWN, STRIPLING! YOU'LL BUST A BLOOD VESSEL CARRYIN' ON THE WAY YOU ARE! LISTEN UP--

--SEEMS THE DAY YOU WERE BORN AN EAGLE KILLED A RAVEN OVER YOUR HEAD, AN' SOME PRIEST OR OTHER DECIDED TO LOOK IT ALL UP IN THEM HOLY STAR-ANNALS THEY FUSS SO MUCH OVER--

--AN' IT TURNED OUT THAT YOU WERE THE SIXTEENTH IN THE ROYAL LINE OF THE HOUSE OF ITHACON, WHICH WASN'T TOO GOOD FOR YOU--

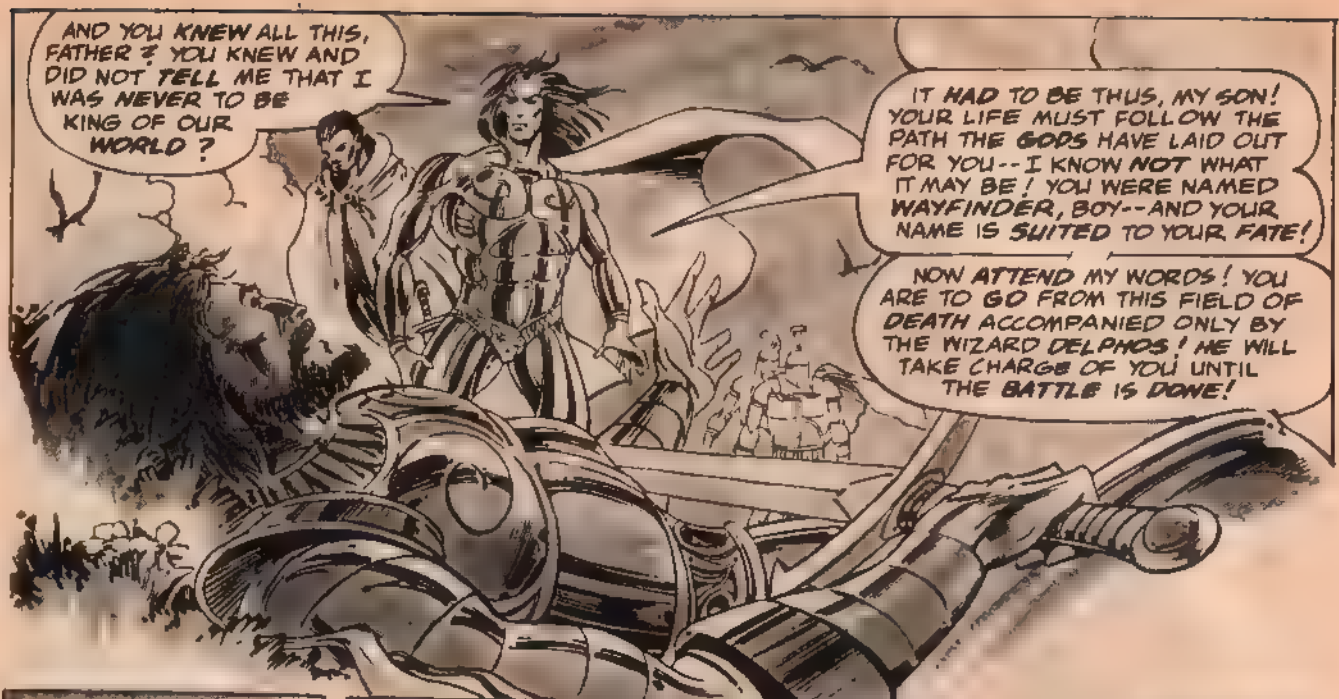
--'CAUSE THAT LINE ENDED, 'CORDIN' TO PROPHECY, AT NUMBER FIFTEEN--YOUR DADDY HERE!



I DO NOT UNDERSTAND, WIZARD!

WELL THEN, LET ME PUT IT TO YOU ANOTHER WAY! YOU AIN'T GONNA BE KING, BOY! NO CHANCE! THAT'S WHY THEY NAMED YOU WAYFINDER!

GOT IT?



AND YOU KNEW ALL THIS, FATHER? YOU KNEW AND DID NOT TELL ME THAT I WAS NEVER TO BE KING OF OUR WORLD?

IT HAD TO BE THUS, MY SON! YOUR LIFE MUST FOLLOW THE PATH THE GODS HAVE LAID OUT FOR YOU-- I KNOW NOT WHAT IT MAY BE! YOU WERE NAMED WAYFINDER, BOY-- AND YOUR NAME IS SUITED TO YOUR FATE!

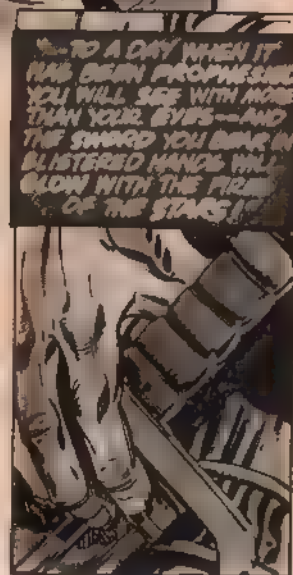
NOW ATTEND MY WORDS! YOU ARE TO GO FROM THIS FIELD OF DEATH ACCOMPANIED ONLY BY THE WIZARD DELPHOS! HE WILL TAKE CHARGE OF YOU UNTIL THE BATTLE IS DONE!



"IT HAS BEEN DECREED THAT I AM TO DIE THIS DAY, MY SON! YOU WILL NOT DIE WITH ME!"



"THE GODS HAVE OTHER PATHS FOR YOU TO WALK--WAYS THAT WILL LEAD YOU TO A TIME WHEN YOU WILL RETURN TO YOUR HOME-WORLD--"

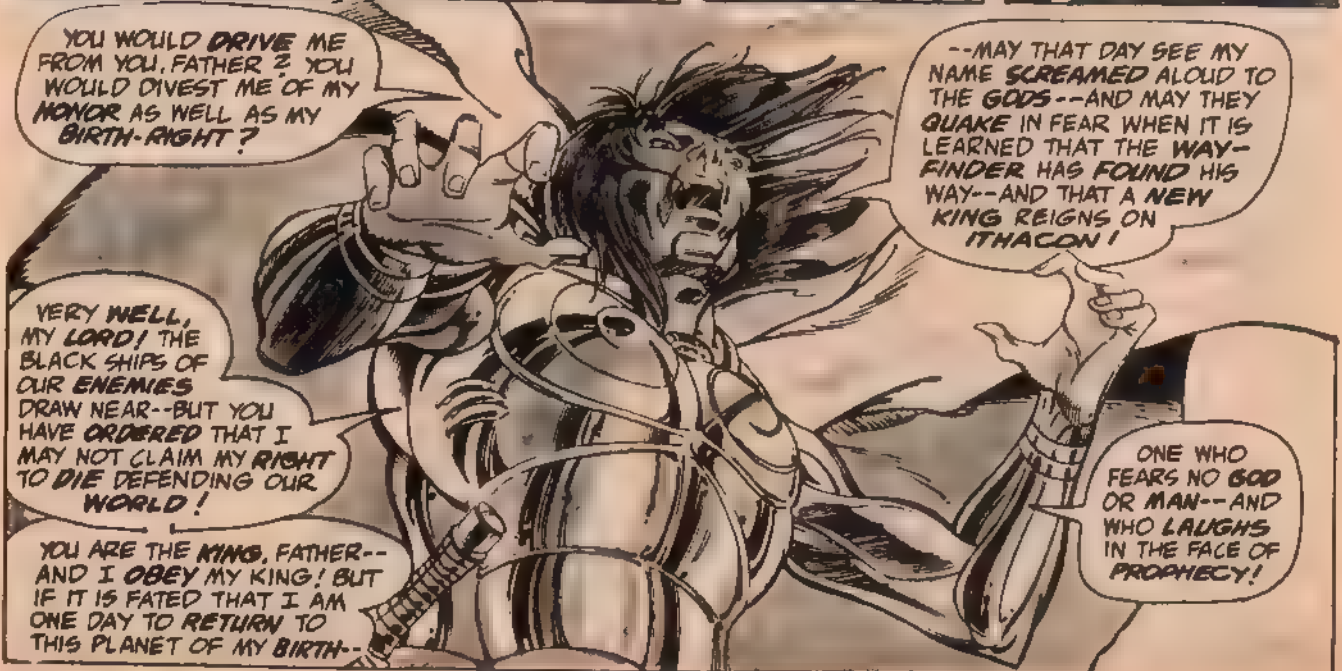


--TO A DAY WHEN IT HAS BEEN PROMISED YOU WILL SEE WITH MORE THAN YOUR EYES--AND THE SWORD YOU BARE IN BLISTERED HANDS WILL GLOW WITH THE FIRE OF THE STARS!



NO! I WILL NOT GO!

WIZARD! SEE THAT HE ACCOMPANIES YOU! MY SOLDIERS WILL ASSIST YOU IF NEED BE!



YOU WOULD DRIVE ME FROM YOU, FATHER? YOU WOULD DIVEST ME OF MY HONOR AS WELL AS MY BIRTH-RIGHT?

--MAY THAT DAY SEE MY NAME SCREAMED ALOUD TO THE GODS--AND MAY THEY QUAKE IN FEAR WHEN IT IS LEARNED THAT THE WAY-FINDER HAS FOUND HIS WAY--AND THAT A NEW KING REIGNS ON ITHACON!

VERY WELL, MY LORD! THE BLACK SHIPS OF OUR ENEMIES DRAW NEAR--BUT YOU HAVE ORDERED THAT I MAY NOT CLAIM MY RIGHT TO DIE DEFENDING OUR WORLD!

YOU ARE THE KING, FATHER-- AND I OBEY MY KING! BUT IF IT IS FATED THAT I AM ONE DAY TO RETURN TO THIS PLANET OF MY BIRTH--

ONE WHO FEARS NO GOD OR MAN-- AND WHO LAUGHS IN THE FACE OF PROPHECY!

COME, WIZARD! THE
VULTURES DRAW NEAR
TO THE CARCASS OF THE
WOLF--AND WE MUST
BE FAR FROM HERE
BEFORE THEY
FEAST!

AIN'T YOU
GONNA SAY
GOODBYE,
BOY? SEEMS
KINDA HARD
TO LEAVE
YOUR DAD
LIKE THIS!

I HAVE NO FATHER,
WIZARD! LET US GO!

TEARS GLISTEN WETLY IN
THE EYES OF THE KING...
AND IF HIS SOLDIERS NOTICE,
THEY LET IT PASS.

THE LIPS OF THE KING MOVE SILENTLY... HIS FAREWELL
TO HIS ONLY SON MUTED BY THE DISTANCE BETWEEN THEM...

I MUST BE LED,
WIZARD! THE
WAYFINDER CARES
NOT WHICH WAY
HE TAKES!

THAT'S OKAY,
JUNIOR! I GOT
A PLACE A
COUPL'A MILES
FROM HERE WHERE
NO HAAMIN IN THE
GALAXY WILL EVER
FIND US! FOLLOW
ME, BOY--FOLLOW
ME!

...BUT THE HEART OF THE KING CRIES OUT. "MAY THE
GODS PROTECT YOU, MY SON!"

"FAREWELL!"

FAREWELL--

MY LORD!

THE KING IS
DEAD,
WARRIORS!

GIRD HIS SWORD ABOUT
HIM! HE WOULD WISH TO
HAVE DIED WITH IT IN HIS
HAND!

ITHACANS!
THEY
COME!
THE ENEMY
COMES!

AT THE FAR EDGE OF THE FIELD OF DEATH...



I MUST SEE, WIZARD!

FINE WITH ME, JUNIOR!
WE'RE FAR ENOUGH
FROM THE CENTER
O' THINGS TO BE SAFE!

BUT DO ME A FAVOR?
IF THE HAAMIN START COMIN'
OUR WAY--DON'T STAND UP
AND START YELLIN' OUT
WHERE WE ARE, OKAY?
I'M FRESH OUT OF
MEDALS AN' BEIN' A
HERO WILL ONLY
GET YOU KILLED!

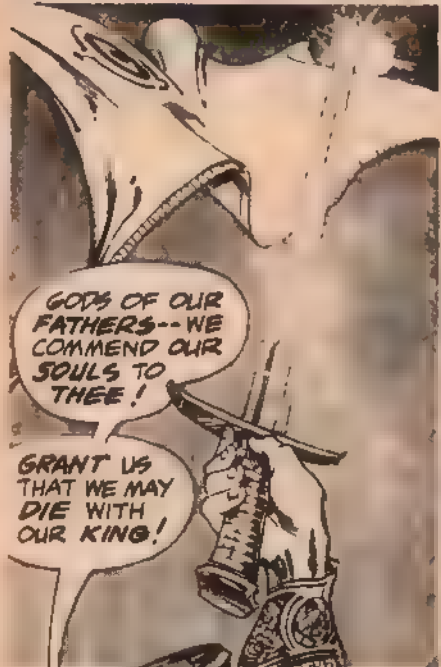
BUT A STRANGE, FAR-
AWAY HUMMING DROWNS
OUT THE WIZARD'S
WORDS...



O GODS...!

THEY
COME,
WIZARD!

... A HUMMING THAT GROWS TO A STEADY DRONE ... AND THEN
THE PULSE OF ENGINES BUILT TO SPAN THE STARS ...



GODS OF OUR
FATHERS--WE
COMMEND OUR
SOULS TO
THEE!

GRANT US
THAT WE MAY
DIE WITH
OUR KING!

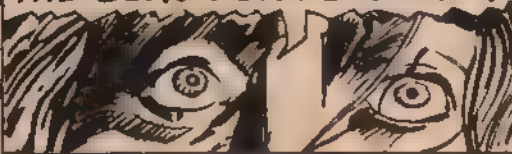


GLEAMING METAL WRAITHS OF
STAR-PIT DARKNESS... THE
BLACK ANGELS OF DEATH
STREAM FROM OUT OF THE
HOME-WORLD'S STRATOSPHERE...



...THEIR PILOTS UNSEEN! NO
HUMAN HAS EVER LAID EYES
ON A HAAMIN WARRIOR AND
LIVED TO SPEAK OF IT!

THE BLACK SHIPS COME!





AND THE
FLAMES OF
DEATH
ENGULF
THE LAST
WARRIORS
OF THE
DEAD ARMY
OF THE
DYING
WORLD OF
ITHACON!

THEIR
SCREAMS
ARE LOST
AS LASER-LIGHT
SEARS THROUGH
BONE AND
ARMOR...THE
AIR IS FOUL
WITH BURN-
ING FLESH!



AGAIN, THEIR SCREAMS ARE LOST.

...AS THEIR
OWN SONIC-
DISRUPTORS
ARE HURLED
UPWARD...TEARING
THE FABRIC OF THE
STAR-SHIPS
APART!



BUT THEY ARE FEW,
AND THE SHIPS OF
THE BLACK FLEET
ARE UNCOUNTABLE
AS THE STARS
FROM WHICH
THEY'VE COME!



THEY CLOSE FOR THE
KILL, WIZARD!



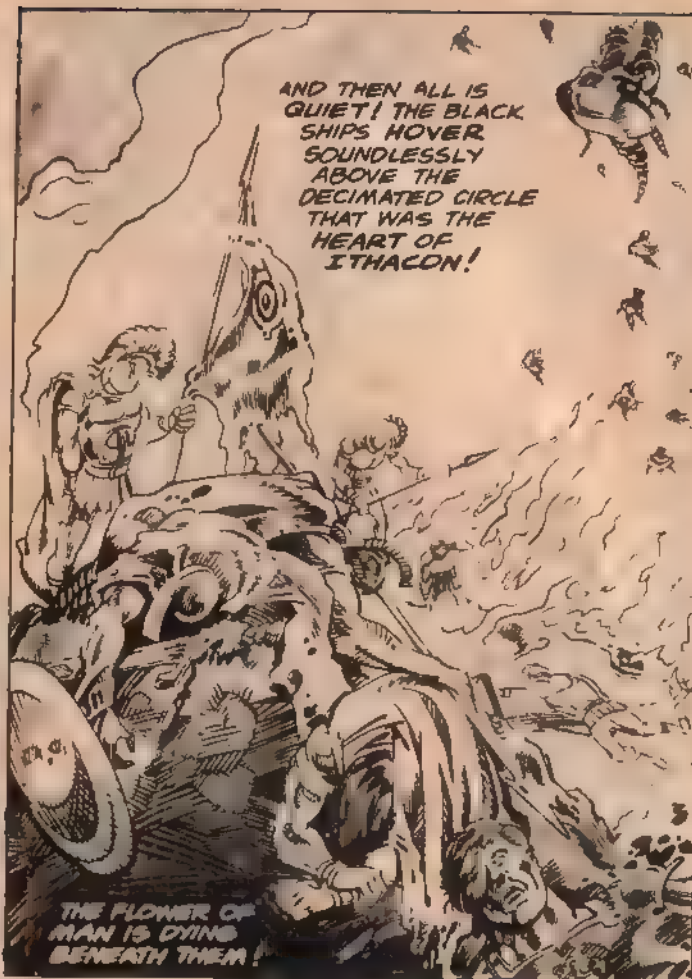
DEATH!

DEATH!



THE THUNDER
WHISPER AS THE
STARSHIP
CRUSHES THE
MOUNTAINS

DOWN,
JUNIOR--
'LESS YOU
WANNA GET
FRIED!



AND THEN ALL IS
QUIET! THE BLACK
SHIPS HOVER
SOUNDLESSLY
ABOVE THE
DECIMATED CIRCLE
THAT WAS THE
HEART OF
ITHACON!

THE FLOWER OF
MAN IS DYING
BENEATH THEM!



FINISH IT,
YOU SPACE-SPAWNED
DEVILS!

THE MEN OF
ITHACON WILL
NEVER YIELD
TO SUCH AS
YOU!



BUT IT GAINS HIM
NOTHING... FOR
NOTHING IS TO BE
SEEN! THE HAAMIN
ARE ENVELOPED
IN THE SAME BLACK
SHROUD THAT
CASES THEIR
EBONY SHIPS!

AND FOR THE FIRST TIME A HUMAN WITNESSES THE FACE OF HIS
CONQUERORS!



THE END
WIZARD!

**THE
END!**



SLOWLY, DISDAIN-
FULLY, A BLACK-
ARMED HAND
GRIPS STEADILY
A
GLEAMING SILVER
VIEWSCOPE.



...AND
A BLACK-
ARMED FINGER
SQUEEZES
SLOWLY
BACK UPON A
GLEAMING
SILVER
TRIGGER...

AND
FAR
ACROSS THE
FIELD OF
WAR, THE
YOUNG
PRINCE
WAYFINDER
THROWS
HIS ARMS
UP BEFORE
HIS FACE.



... AND SCREAMS FROM THE
DEPTHS OF HIS SOUL !

BUT HIS SCREAM IS NOT HEARD...
FOR NONE LIVE NOW UPON THE PLAIN
OF HIS HOME-WORLD TO HEAR IT.



THE HAAMIN FLEET
IS GONE-- THE
CARNAGE ALL
ABOUT HIM THE ONLY
TANGIBLE REMINDER
THAT IT DID, TRULY,
EXIST!

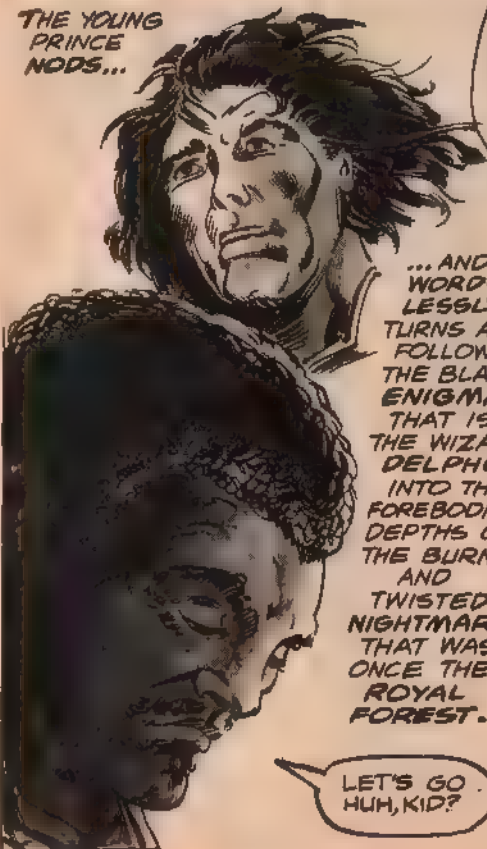


IT'S OVER,
JUNIOR!



THE YOUNG
PRINCE
NODS...

COME ON! THEY'RE
GONNA CIRCLE THE
PLANET A FEW TIMES,
LOOKIN' WITH THEIR TRACERS
FOR SIGNS OF LIFE--AN' I
WANT US TO BE LONG GONE
WHEN THEY HIT THIS SIDE
OF TOWN AGAIN!



...AND
WORD-
LESSLY
TURNS AND
FOLLOWS
THE BLACK
ENIGMA
THAT IS
THE WIZARD
DELPHOS
INTO THE
FOREBODING
DEPTHS OF
THE BURNT
AND
TWISTED
NIGHTMARE
THAT WAS
ONCE THE
ROYAL
FOREST.

LET'S GO
HUH, KID?

AND IF THE WIZARD HEARS THE MUFFLED SOBS FROM
HIS YOUNG COMPANION, HE PRETENDS IT IS NOTHING
MORE THAN THE SIGH OF THE WIND IN THE VANISHED
LEAVES OF THE BLACKENED STUMPS THAT ONCE WERE
TREES ABOUT THEM.



THE MOONS, CIRCE AND
NAUSIKAA, RISE ABOVE
THEM...

... AND ARE CLOSE TO
SETTING WHEN AT LAST
THEY REACH...

HOME,
BOY!
WE
MADE
IT!

WHAT NEW JOKE
IS THIS, WIZARD?
YOU HAVE DONE NAUGHT
BUT BABBLE OF THINGS
I DO NOT UNDERSTAND!
AND NOW YOU POINT TO
A HOLE IN THE EARTH
AND TELL ME WE
ARE HOME!

HAVE IT YOUR WAY, KIDDO!
ALL I BEEN TRYIN' TO DO
WAS TELL YOU SOME THINGS
YOU MIGHT NOT'VE KNOWN
ABOUT YOUR OLD MAN!

HE WAS A GOOD
KING-- YOUR POP!
A LITTLE STUBBORN,
MAYBE, BUT QUICK TO
FIGURE OUT THAT THERE
WAS A LOT OF THINGS
GOIN' ON THAT HE DID
NOT KNOW ABOUT!

THE KIND OF THINGS
THAT I COULD LAY ON
HIM! WHERE THE # % *
IS THAT SWITCH?

WHAT
THINGS,
WIZARD?
AND
WHAT IS A
SWITCH?

OH, LOTS O'
THINGS-- AH!
HERE IT IS!

--AND PRESTO!
WELCOME TO MY
INNER SANCTUM,
JUNIOR! FOOD'S
NOT THE BEST,
BUT WE TRY!

BY THE
GODS!

NOPE! THE GODS
HAD NOTHIN' TO
DO WITH THIS,
PRINCELING!
CAN'T BLAME YOU
FOR BEIN' SPOOKED,
THO'-- YOUR DADDY
WAS TOO, FIRST TIME
I SHOWED HIM
THIS PLACE!

HE WAS A TOUGH
OLD BUZZARD THO'--
CAUGHT ON QUICK!
SOON'S I LAYED THE
'TEACHER' ON HIM,
THAT IS!

WONDER UPON WONDER
STRETCHES BEFORE THE
STARTLED EYES OF THE
BARBARIAN PRINCE OF
ITHACON! MAGIC... THAT
HE KNEW, OR THOUGHT HE
DID! HADN'T THE PRIESTS
SPOKE OF MAGIC AS A
GIFT OF THE GODS AS
THEY PEEPED AMONGST
THE BLOODY ENTRAILS OF
A FOWL-- THAT
WAS MAGIC! BUT THIS

BY THE GODS!
I AM LED BY
A MADMAN!!

MIRACLE UPON
MIRACLE AS HIS
GREY EYES DART
IN ALL DIRECTIONS
AT ONCE--SEE-
ING ALL AND
UNDERSTANDING
NONE OF WHAT
THEY TAKE IN--

IT'S CALLED SCIENCE,
JUNIOR / USED TO BE QUITE
POPULAR ABOUT--OH--
FIFTEEN THOUSAND
YEARS AGO!!

--BUT REMEMBERING, DIM IN
THE FARTHEST REACHES OF HIS
DREAMS, MEMORIES OF THINGS
HE'S NEVER SEEN.

HAVE A LOOK
AROUND WHILE I
SET UP THE 'TEACHER'!

THIS HERE'S THE
TEACHER, KIDDO!
C'MERE AN' LET ME
FIX IT ON YOUR
HEAD!

THIS--
THIS IS MAD-
NESS,
WIZARD!
IT IS--

BUT DON'T TOUCH
ANYTHING UNLESS
YOU TASTE IT FIRST--
AND IF IT KILLS YOU,
DON'T TOUCH IT
TWICE!!

YEAH, YEAH / ANOTHER
TIME, HUH, KID! IT'S GONNA
TAKE ONE HELL OF AN
ENERGY DRAIN TO KNOCK
SOME SENSE INTO THAT
THICK HEAD OF YOURS--
AND A DRAIN THAT BIG IS
SURE TO BRING THE
HAAMIN DOWN ON US
BEFORE WE CAN SAY
JIMINY CRICKET!

SO GET
YOUR TAIL
OVER
HERE AN'
SIT
DOWN!
O.K.?

NONE OF IT--
NOT THE THINGS
HE SEES OR
THE WIZARD'S
STRANGE
WORDS--MAKE
ANY SENSE TO
WATKINS--
IN THE
LEAST--
BUT HE DOES
THINK HE IS BAD!

THIS ONLY GETS YOU
ONE SHOW.
PRINCELING, SO PAY
ATTENTION!

WATKINS HEARS THE CLIP
OF THE COIN FALLING
TO A SLOT SO CLOSE TO
THE DEVICE THAT HE
HEARS THE CLIP...

...AND HE HEARS THE DEVICE
BEGIN TO WHIR, FEELS THE
JAG OF TINY PINPRICKS AS
ELECTRODES PIERCE HIS
SCALP...

ATTA BOY,
KIDDO! NOW
YOU JUST HANG
LOOSE WHILE I
FIND MY NICKEL--
THE TEACHER
GOT WISE
TO MY FEEDIN'
HIM SLUGS A
WHILE BACK--
AH, HERE
WE GO!

IT WOULD HAVE
BEEN CHEAPER TO
LET YOU HAVE YOUR
OWN WAY BACK THERE
ON THE BATTLEFIELD
AN' LET YOU GO UP IN
SMOKE! OH WELL--

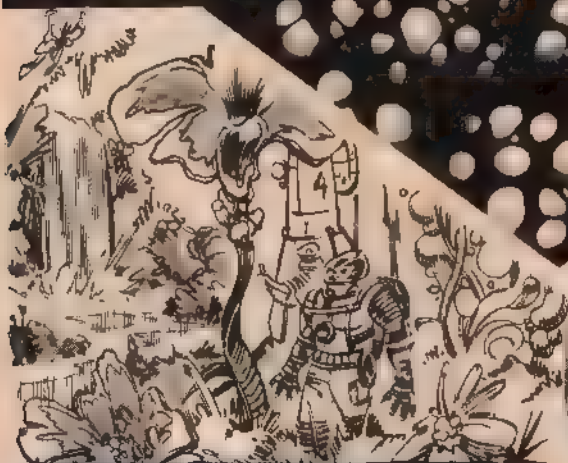


... AND HE SCREAMS AS HIS MIND FLARES INTO BRILLIANCE!

"HANG ON TO YOUR SEAT, JUNIOR! HERE WE GO!!"

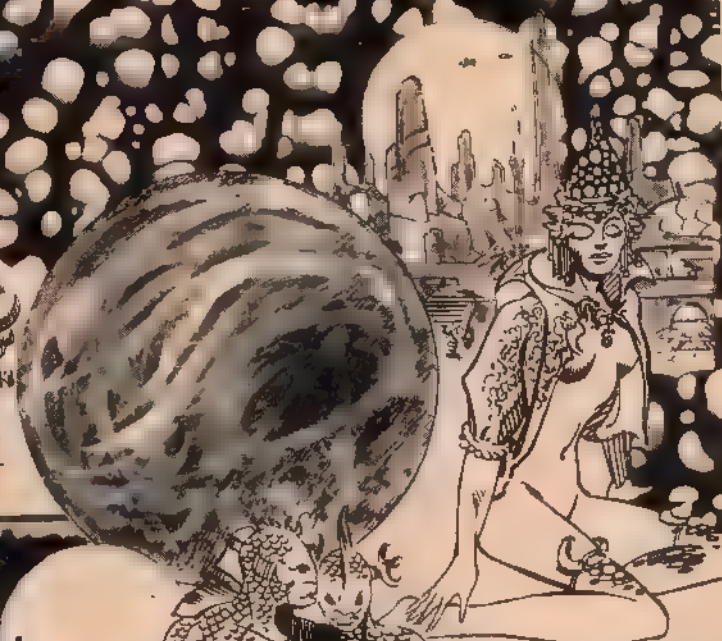
...and the HOME-WORLD of MAN had been called...the EARTH, and it was no longer GOOD! Man had FILTHIED his SEAS, stripped bare his LANDS, 'til all was WASTE about him...and MAN could not LIVE with his own DESTRUCTION! So he built the SILVER SHIPS, and the SEED of MAN was sown across the STARS, penetrating to the EDGE of the galaxy and BEYOND—

In the STARS man found Sometimes PARADISE...



...sometimes HELL—if he reached new worlds at ALL! For there were places where the SOLAR WINDS—

and those whose ships were torn by the FASHIONS of man, perished that were not BORN with the voyagers to the STARS!"



"But it is EVER man's lot to SURVIVE—and to survive man needed to CHANGE! In places he changed the WORLD he'd chosen to fit HIMSELF—in places he changed HIMSELF to fit the WORLD!"

Man ADAPTED—men LIVED!

GODS!

"NO, KIDDO-- NOT GODS-- MAN!"

"MAN DID IT ALL HIMSELF! KEEP WATCHIN', JUNIOR!
HERE'S WHERE IT GETS HEAVY!"

And in time the races of man forgot the EXISTENCE
of the OTHERS—and each world, each STAR-SYSTEM—
grew to FEAR what they felt was 'DIFFERENT' from their
own evolutionary PROGRESSION..."

"KNOWLEDGE,
SCIENCE, all began
to FALL before the
onslaught of BARBARISM
the principle of the STAR-
STATE, the PLANET STATE, the
SO-LATED MAN casting man into
a DARK AGES the like of which
he has NEVER KNOWN
BEFORE!"

"...and man FOUGHT AGAIN—
as he has ALWAYS fought—
but THIS time the BATTLEFIELD
was the GALAXY, not a pitiful little
P-PLANET that could harm none but
ITSELF!"

"Stars were moved from their ORBITS
their worlds either FREEZING or
BURNING UP—their peoples
DESTROYED!"

"And at the RADICAL CIVILIZATION came the HAAMIN
evolved man from beyond the EDGE of the GALAXY.
Lost races of men who fled into MADNESS and the UNKNOWN
at the finish of the EARTH gone before..."

"...and whose RETURN may very well mark the END of
Man as he is KNOWN—for this of HUMAN ORIGIN—
the Haamin are—'DIFFERENT'—changed by whatever lays
BEYOND our KNOWLEDGE!"

"And man, in his present barbaric state of DISSOLUTION,
does not stand a CHANCE before these mysterious CON-
QUERORS from beyond the FRINGE!"

HOW IS IT
POSSIBLE?

OH, IT'S POSSIBLE ALL
RIGHT, JUNIOR!

WE SHAFTED OURSELVES
GOOD FOR A WHOLE BUNCH
OF CENTURIES! I KNOW,
BOY!

I WAS THERE!

WAYFINDER REMOVES THE DEVICE KNOWN AS THE TEACHER... SURE THAT ITS BULK HAS CAUSED HIM TO HEAR WRONGLY THE WIZARD'S LAST STATEMENT...

DON'T LOOK SO SHOLKED, STRIPLING! SCIENCE HAD GOTTEN PRETTY FAR WHILE ALL THAT WAS GOIN' DOWN!

FAR ENOUGH LEAST-WAYS TO KEEP A MAN ALIVE FOR ABOUT TEN THOUSAND YEARS! I WAS ONE OF THE FIRST! A MILD-MANNERED CHEMIST WHO GOT CHOSEN TO BE METHUSALAH!

YOU--YOU SAW ALL THAT THIS--THIS DEVICE CAUSED TO APPEAR IN MY MIND!

WIZARD! YOU ARE MAD!

I'M MAD, HUH, KIDDO? YOU JUST WATCHED YOUR OLD MAN GET FRIED A WHILE BACK AND YOU GOT THE BALL TO TALK ABOUT MADNESS!

YOU SNOT-NOSED WHELP!

YOUR FATHER DUG ON ALL OF THIS-- BUT HE COULDN'T CHANGE IT! HE WAS LOCKED INTO ALL THAT HONOR AND KINGDOM CRAP AND COULDN'T EVER GET HIMSELF OUT OF IT!

BUT YOU-- HE PINNED ALL HIS HOPES ON YOU AND A LEGEND WE DUG UP ON ONE OF THE TAPES ABOUT A WEAPON THE SCIENTISTS HAD HIDDEN JUST BEFORE THE COMING OF THE HAMMIN!

A WEAPON SO STRONG THAT IT MIGHT JUST GET THIS CRUMMY BIOLOGICAL NIGHTMARE CALLED MAN BACK ON HIS FEET-- AND ON SOME KINDA PATH UP AGAIN!

THAT FLASHING BEACON, WIZARD! WHAT--?

WE TOOK TOO LONG, BOY! THEY'VE FOUND US!

THE HAMMIN HAVE LOCATED THE CAVERN!

ALERT

WOOOM

THERE GOES WHOEVER TRIED TO MOVE THE **STONE** WITHOUT THE COMBINATION!

THAT WILL NOT HOLD THEM LONG, WIZARD! WE MUST ARM OURSELVES AND FIGHT THEM!

WE'VE GOT A FEW SECONDS! WE CAN STILL MAKE IT TO THE SHIP!

IN A PIG'S EYE WE'LL FIGHT THEM! DID YOU FALL ON YOUR HEAD WHEN YOU WERE A KID?

AGAIN I MUST RUN RATHER THAN STAND AND DIE WITH HONOR!

BY THE GODS, WIZARD! I LIKE IT NOT!

WHAT YOU LIKE OR
DON'T LIKE AIN'T
MY AFFAIR, JUNIOR--

--BUT SAVIN' MY
TEN THOUSAND YEAR
OLD NECK-- THAT
RANKS HIGH ON MY
LIST OF PRIORITIES!

APOLLO AND
APHRODITE!
WHAT
WONDERMENT
IS THIS!?!

SHE SITS QUIET... THE STAR-CURRENTS
HIDDEN FROM THE DELICATE SOLAR-
SENSORS THAT, WHEN TOUCHED BY
THE DIM AND DISTANT LIGHT OF FAR-
AWAY SUNS, WILL FILL HER SILVER
SAILS AND LIFT HER FROM HER
ROCK-BOUND ANCHOR.

A
SHIP!

WE'VE GOT
TO CAST OFF,
BOY! THEY'LL
BE ON US ANY
SECOND NOW!

...AND IT IS A
SONG OF
EXULTATION
AS HIS
SANDALLED
FEET TOUCH
THE GLEAM-
ING DECK.
A SHIP...

QUIT STARING,
YOU SIMPLE-MINDED
BARBARIAN!

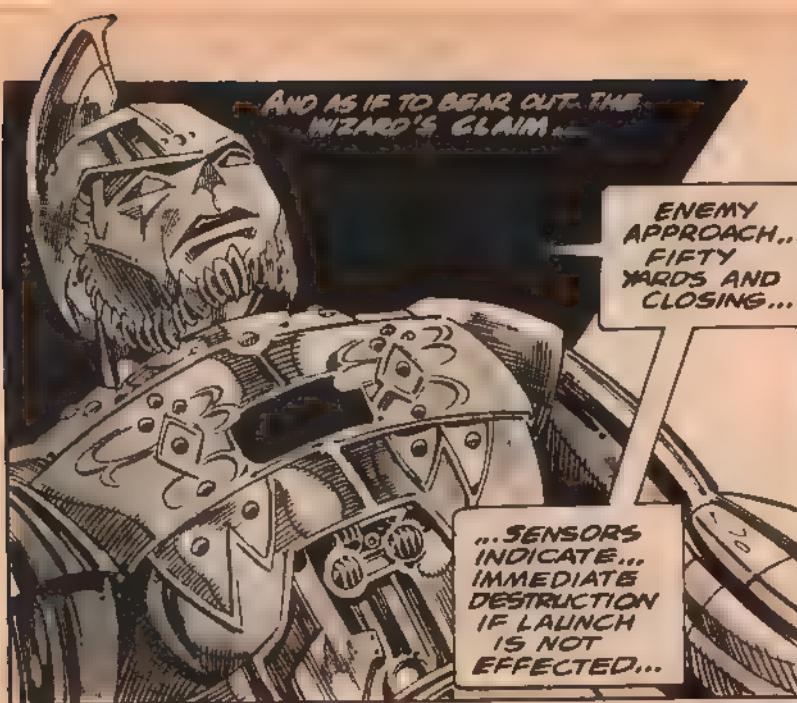
HER NAME, HE KNOWS
INSTINCTIVELY, IS STAR-
SEED... A VESSEL THAT
WILL CARRY HIM... THAT
WILL CARRY HIM... TO
THOSE DISTANT POINTS OF
BRILLIANCE, AND HIS
DESTINY IN THE HEAVENS!

...HIS SHIP!

GET TO THE BOW,
PRINCELING! ALKINOOS
HERE WILL STEER
US ONCE I PUNCH
OUT THE
COURSE!

ALKINOOS?
HE IS A
MACHINE,
WIZARD!

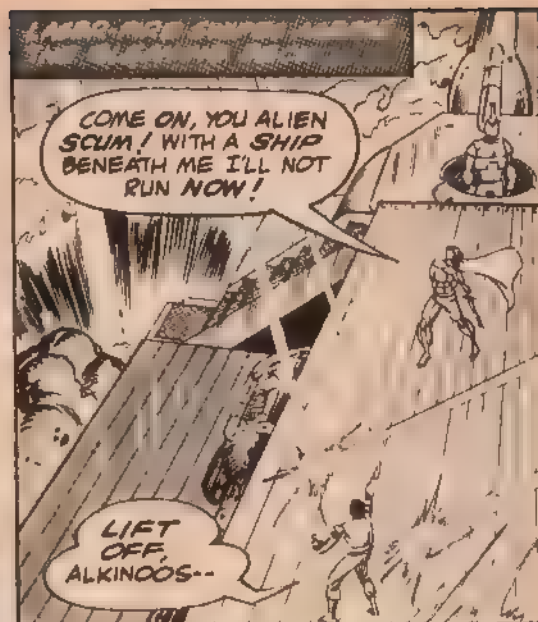
A COMPUTER, BOY!
AND HE'S GOT
FEELINGS-- SO
WATCH HOW YOU
TALK ABOUT HIM!



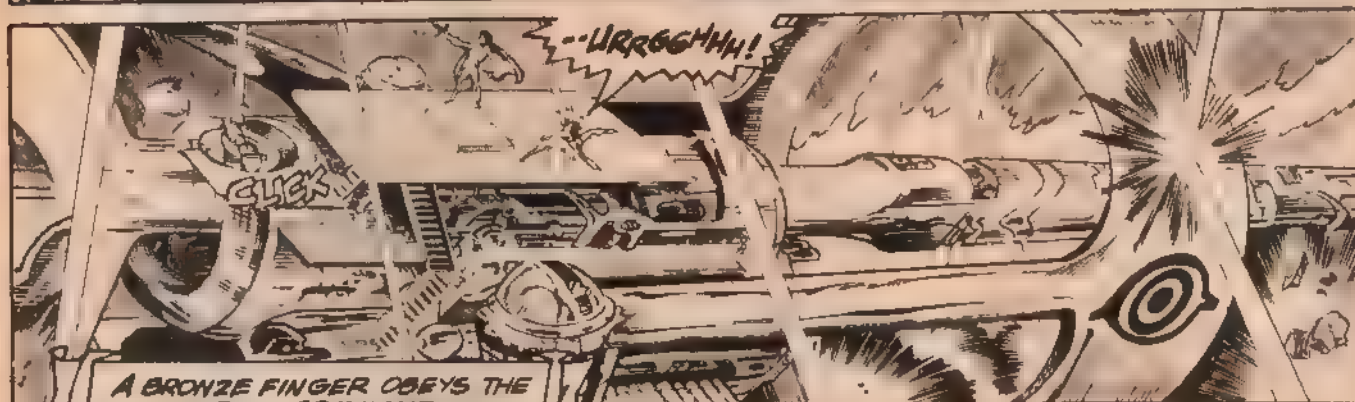
AND AS IF TO BEAR OUT THE WIZARD'S CLAIM...

ENEMY
APPROACH...
FIFTY
YARDS AND
CLOSING...

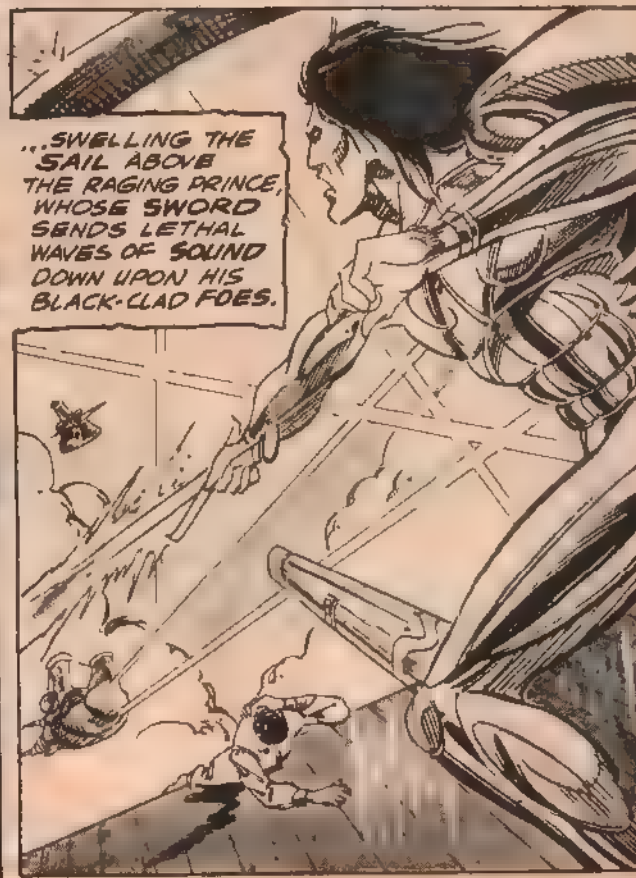
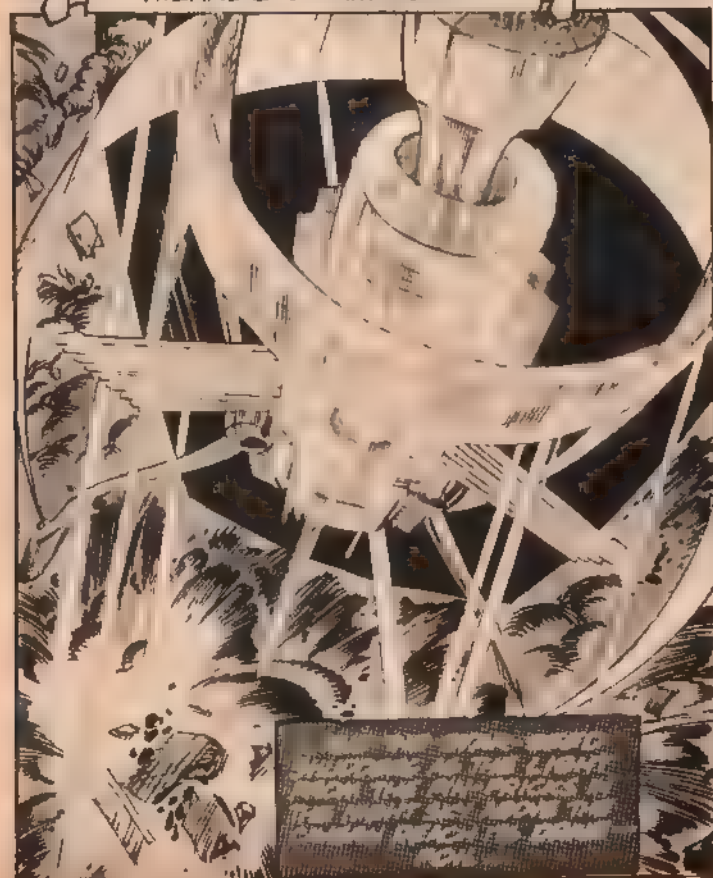
...SENSORS
INDICATE...
IMMEDIATE
DESTRUCTION
IF LAUNCH
IS NOT
EFFECTED...



LIFT
OFF,
ALKINOOS--



A BRONZE FINGER OBEYS THE WIZARD'S COMMAND...



...SWELLING THE
SAIL ABOVE
THE RAGING PRINCE,
WHOSE SWORD
SENDS LETHAL
WAVES OF SOUND
DOWN UPON HIS
BLACK-CLAD FOES.

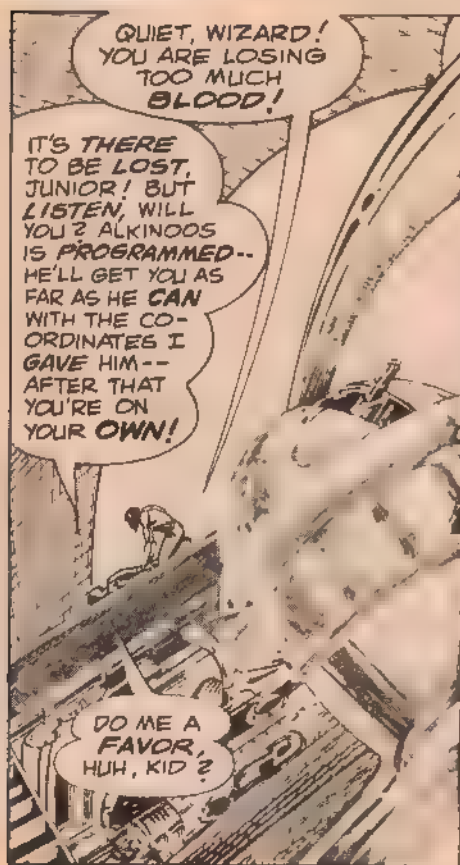


OBSERVATION:
SHIP IS OUT OF
RANGE OF ENEMY
FIRE!

...WE ARE
LAUNCHED!

DELPHOS!
YOU'RE
HURT!

HAPPENS TO THE BEST OF
US, KID! TEN THOUSAND YEARS
IS ONE HELL OF A TIME TO
HANG OUT IN THIS CRUMMY
UNIVERSE!



QUIET, WIZARD!
YOU ARE LOSING
TOO MUCH
BLOOD!

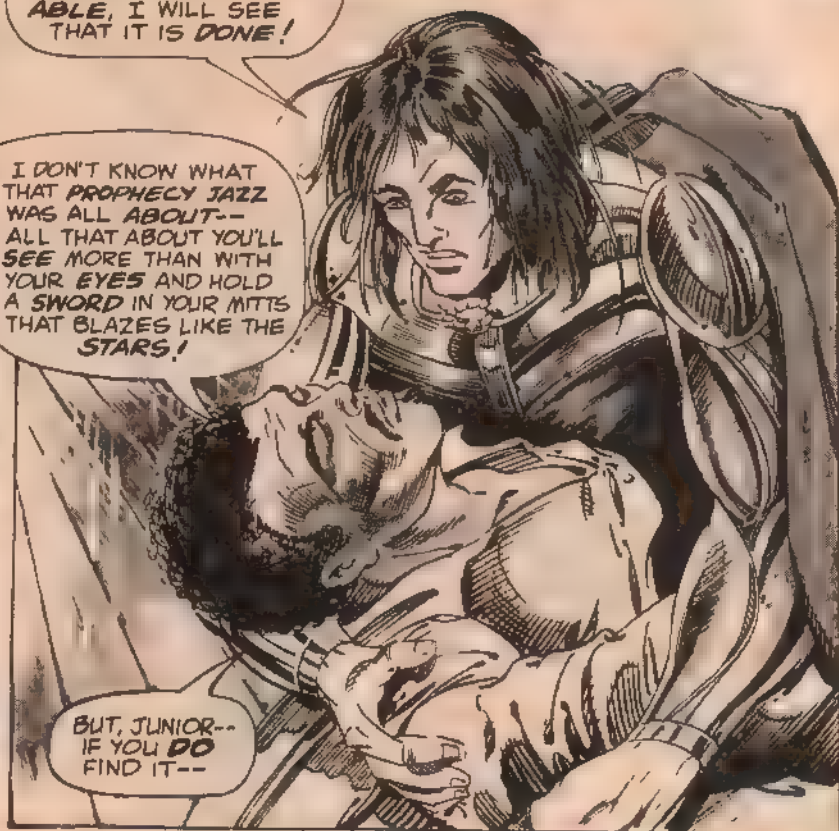
IT'S THERE
TO BE LOST,
JUNIOR! BUT
LISTEN, WILL
YOU? ALKINOOS
IS PROGRAMMED--
HE'LL GET YOU AS
FAR AS HE CAN
WITH THE CO-
ORDINATES I
GAVE HIM--
AFTER THAT
YOU'RE ON
YOUR OWN!

DO ME A
FAVOR,
HUH, KID?

YOU NEED BUT ASK IT,
WIZARD, AND IF I AM
ABLE, I WILL SEE
THAT IT IS DONE!

I DON'T KNOW WHAT
THAT PROPHECY JAZZ
WAS ALL ABOUT--
ALL THAT ABOUT YOU'LL
SEE MORE THAN WITH
YOUR EYES AND HOLD
A SWORD IN YOUR MITTS
THAT BLAZES LIKE THE
STARS!

BUT, JUNIOR--
IF YOU DO
FIND IT--



--THINK A
LITTLE
BEFORE
YOU USE
IT, OK?

AS FOR ME, I'M
KINDA GLAD MY
END OF IT IS
OVER!





**N
O
W**

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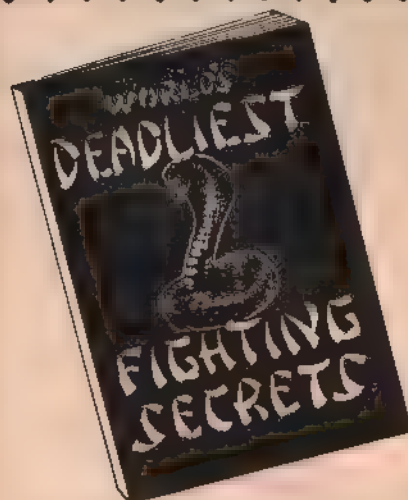
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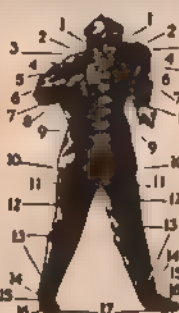
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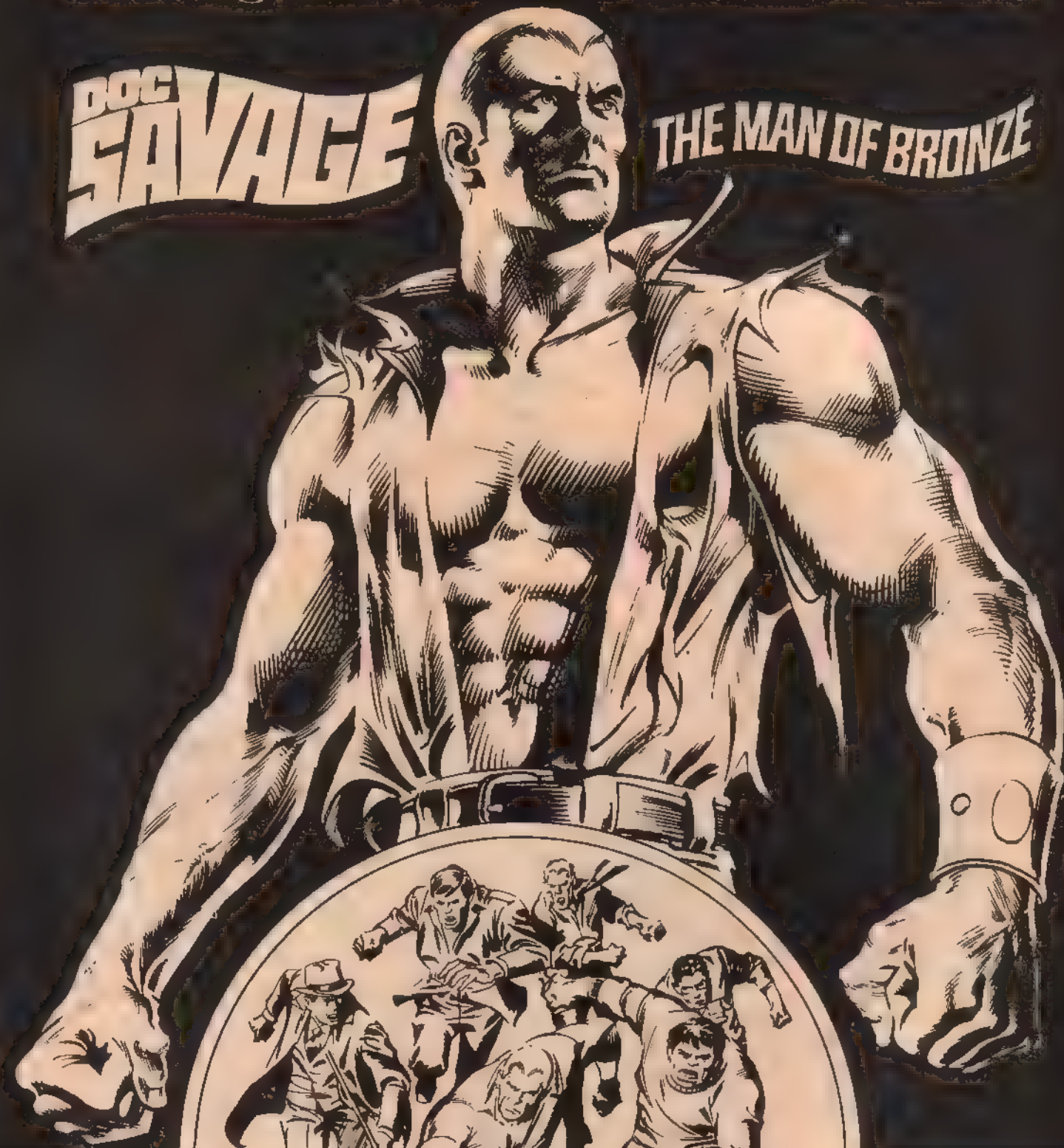
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PREVIEW REVIEW



This is always an interesting letter column to work on. Not only do we get intelligent comments and critiques on our features, but we also receive many fascinating (and, granted, some not-so-fascinating) ideas for series plots to showcase in the book.

Then, too, it can be a bit confusing. Anybody who's been looking for a letter column on MARVEL PREVIEW #2 (THE PUNISHER & DOMINIC FORTUNE) will have to pick up a copy of MARVEL SUPER ACTION #1 (On sale November 18th and featuring the same two stalwart stars of MP #2, plus a lady called THE HUNTRESS), those who were looking for THOR THE MIGHTY in MARVEL PREVIEW #3 (as announced in #2) will have to wait, thanks to some last minute schedule rearranging (it *will* appear, but at this moment we're not certain whether that appearance will be in the regular color THOR or in a future issue of MP), those who were looking for TITAN in *this* issue (as announced *last* issue) should now keep an eye on the MARVEL SPOTLIGHT and MARVEL PREMIERE color editions -- it'll pop up there. And if all this makes you suspect that the Betty Bullpen is a mite disorganized at times, consider yourself an Armadillo-For-A-Day.

Dear Everybody,

BLADE, THE VAMPIRE SLAYER was a very promising feature, both the script and artwork were of the highest calibre. In fact, I think of high enough calibre that he (it) deserves his (its) own feature. However, I don't really think that the feature is strong enough or really deserves a whole black and white to itself so how about a color comic starring of Blade? (Oh, how I wish you hadn't discontinued your giant sized line -- a GIANT SIZE BLADE, THE VAMPIRE SLAYER with a co-feature of, say, Hannibal King would have been great!!)

For future tryouts in MARVEL PREVIEW, I recommend The Silver Surfer and Elnc of Menibone I'd also like to see, as someone suggested, Star Trek and/or James Bond, if at all possible. Two such projects treated with tender loving care could be graphic masterpieces! If they were well-received by the public (as it seems likely) you could give them their own b&w's, replacing SAVAGE TALES, DRACULA LIVES, or VAMPIRE TALES.

Well I've already enraged enough people by "cancelling" their mags so I'd better sign off. I'm merely trying to replace some poorer mags with some better ones. Adios!

Howard Keys
Worthington, WV

Dear MARVEL

This is the first time I've ever written you, although I read all your titles. I've never written because I've never had anything to say, but now I have a couple of suggestions for upcoming issues of MARVEL PREVIEW.

I liked your Conan Elnc story in GIANT SIZE CONAN recently, and I was wondering if it would be possible for you to do an issue featuring Elnc. If he works out well you could use him as a second series in SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN or KULL AND THE BARBARIANS. Even if not, it'd make a great one-time story.

Then there's Michael Moorcock's Eternal Champion, though these stories are probably not as well known to most of your readers as Elnc might. At any rate, they would make a great set of stories as a one-shot collection also.

Even if this letter doesn't see print, I hope the ideas will!

Shelia Thompson
New York, New York

Dear Marvelites and Rhodan Fans around the world,
The time has come
The time has come when we must all stand up and

ask -- NO, demand - that *ME* be honored by the media of comics.

Who is *ME*, you ask?

I never thought you would ask.

For the unwritten his name is PERRY RHODAN. But for those in the know he is the greatest thing in science fiction today. The peace lord of the universe.

Up till now we have had to content ourselves with just the great, and I do mean *GREAT* art covers done for the PERRY RHODAN books by GRAY MORROW. Why, I ask you, why should this go on? Let it be proclaimed throughout Marveldom. We want PERRY. Not to mention PUCKY, ATLAN, BELL, THORA, KHREST, ETC., ETC.

The world's longest running science fiction story must have its due. In Germany there are over 700 PERRY books that have been published, and are still being published at the rate of once a week.

So get on the ball out there you RHOFANS and let Marvel know that you want RHODAN NOW.

This has been a public service announcement.

ZU BELL,
Dale Russell
Chico, CA

Dear Editors,

Just picked up the second smash issue of Marvel Preview, with The Punisher, and wanted to congratulate you on the back to back successes. Along with many others who write and voice their suggestions on future stories, I wanted to add my two cents worth for the following superheroes:

1) Since Thor is going to get his black and white debut in your third issue, I cast my vote for a future preview of The Beast, Hawkeye, and The Vision from the Avengers group. The Beast has had his own series but now has reached a new popularity with the Avengers (love those impersonations of Edward G. I). Hawkeye and The Vision have never really had a chance to go solo, and the exposure sure couldn't hurt them.

2) Dr. Strange--A black and white sorcery tale could rival sword and sorcery tales of Conan and the gang. Please consider this one carefully.

3) Last, but not least, Marvel's Own Crusading Crusader, Dane Whitman (a.k.a. the Black Knight). Since you haven't given the Knight any stories in the 12th century (an idea which could have been used in the late Savage Tales), bring him back to the 20th century and

have him rejoin his fellow Avengers. This storyline could be followed up in a not so distant issue of Marvel Preview, using The Beast, Hawkeye, The Vision, and Iron Man or Thor, maybe with the addition of honorary member Red Wolf if you wanted to keep your big guns off the story.

These ideas aren't just idle ramblings the above mentioned heroes could be developed in a black and white mag that just couldn't be done in the color mags.

Whether they make it or not, Marvel Preview has made magazine reading an added pleasure. Keep up the good work.

Jerry Wrenn
Castro Valley, CA

Dear MARVEL,

For "pilots" I strongly suggest you do POWERMAN. He is a great hero, and deserves to be unchained in the b&w field.

Secondly, I think you could do the FALCON. He deserves to show what he can do on his own! To get away from CAP would be very good for him. If you gave him his own comic it would be a sell-out!

Next, you could do the VISION! I'm surprised you haven't given him his own series already! He is the most unique character in all of Marvelism! You could develop his marriage with Wanda and show what their life is like! Lastly, TALES OF GALACTUS, the F.F.'s foe would seem like a good character to try out! Think of the infinite possibilities. I think he also deserves to be tried out!

Well, the possibilities are infinite. I could ramble on and on. Those three I mentioned, were the best choice, I thought. In any event, I will always give a dollar for MARVEL PREVIEW!

Richard Guion
Corpus Christi, Tex.

Dear Marvin and the Previewers, (Shoo-Bop-Dee-Bop),

The Punisher was nothing short of fantastic. The story was great. The art was great, and the character (The Punisher) was better than ever. Dominic Fortune wasn't bad either.

However, none of the above can be considered what affected me most about the mag. What affected me more than anything else was the gray box on page 5. In it, you said that the likelihood of Marvel doing THE HOBBIT was not great.

I firmly believe that THE HOBBIT as well as THE LORD OF THE RINGS, is a story that cries out for an appearance in comic form.

In my opinion, your reasons for not adapting this story were a bit weak. As to THE HOBBIT's being something you don't tamper with the same could have been said about the CONAN saga. Yet the CONAN stories you did were handled beautifully.

Concerning "thought and care", I think Marvel puts enough thought and care into their work to adapt anything. Roy Thomas could adapt THE HOBBIT magnificently. As Mark Worthen said in his letter, Marvel has the right artists for the Middle Earth stories. Frank Brunner doesn't seem to be too busy to work on it. Maybe you could even get Barry Smith to do it.

Marvel, and comics in general, need the greatness THE HOBBIT can bring. Marvel has attained a peak of greatness. It must logically move on to keep from stagnating. The way I see it, THE HOBBIT is the next step on Marvel's glorious path. It could even be taken past the end of THE LORD OF THE RINGS, since Tolkien left ample room for a sequel.

If Marvel does not adapt this story (or stories), it will be passing up the chance of its lifetime.

So, 'til Sauron returns, MAKE MINE MARVEL!

Ed Maietta
Lake Ronkonkoma, NY

Dear House of Ideas!

Thus far, MARVEL PREVIEW (featuring who-knows-who) has seen excellent concept choices. But in the future, there will be need for more character ideas. Might I suggest he said:

1) SATANA and LILITH. If nothing else, the differences between the two characters could be made clear (like,

Lilith has her heart in the right place, while Setana has none at all. I think Gerber's Lilith would be a fine lead, as would Setana, now that she's freed from her original quest. Exotic adventure...

2) DEATHLOK. It's one of Marvel's few color series to be totally inhibited by the code, and its maturity would be best served by the older-audience B&W format.

3) A B&W war book. I realize that for editor Goodwin, this would be not unlike returning to the scene of the crime (what's that, Arch? Why are you *blazing*?), but, market permitting, it would be a fine, freer home for the beautiful WAR IS HELL.

4) A haunting, vengeful SCARECROW. The character, as someone named Klorosa said elsewhere, has a great mystery/action potential, and need not be rooted in any particular time or sub-genre. A landmark character could result.

5) MAN-THING. I'll miss the ol' walking swamp...

Of course, with all these concepts, a monthly PREVIEW might not be a bad idea. And of course, you need not stick to these ideas; you're free to use your own, if you ask nicely. (Put down that hatchet, Archie...!)

John Elliot
New York, NY

Thanx, Howard & Sheila & Dale & Jerry & Richard & Ed & John, as well as all the other people who wrote in with suggestions for series to be tried out in the pages of MARVEL PREVIEW. Several of them (most notably at the moment the MOON KNIGHT, the BLACK KNIGHT—set in the twelfth century, by the way, Jerry—and the VISION) will pop up in MARVEL PREVIEW's color sister mags, MARVEL PREMIERE and MARVEL SPOTLIGHT. (As a matter of fact, the MOON KNIGHT is well in the works already, and should see print in the next few months. Keep on the lookout for it.)

Many of the characters you people mentioned seem somewhat more suited to the color medium, but a few of them (like MORBIUS, or DOC STRANGE) seem more-than-possible candidates for these pages. Just keep watching the mag for a continuous flow of try-outs (and of course, if you like a particular feature, it'd always help its chances of getting a black-and-white mag of its own if you and everybody you know were to buy a few zillion extra copies).

Keep sending in those ideas, and let us know what you think of the ones mentioned in the above letters.

Dear Ones,

Cognitive dissonance, as I understand it, is the trait of believing that what one owns is of worth simply because of the effort one spent in acquiring it, even if one would not like what he (she, it) has under other circumstances. For instance—“Well, I got a subscription to the damn magazine, I guess I better read every issue. Who knows, it may even be pretty good.”

Case in point, Marvel Preview #3, the first issue in my subscription was supposed to be Thor the Mighty; instead, 'twas Blade, the “Bad Dude.” But, even though I don't like Vampire Tales, I did buy the thing, and I guess I better read it. Besides, Thor's going to be Mighty-ing around in his own B&W mag, and I can always get that.

So read it I did, and let me tell you that my slight disappointment was short-lived. I thought it was a very fine story indeed. Maybe you are putting forth a special effort because of the newness of Marvel Preview, or maybe I've been missing something in your color mag, TOMB OF DRAC. But whatever the case, I know why I liked the story. It was because it was about the man instead of the monster, with men fighting him. BLADE was the hero, not Drac, and like they say in the commercials, “I like that!”

Now, I have no doubt that to some people the thing was a flop from a technical point of view. For instance, why didn't at least *some* of those vamps turn into mist before Blade's knives could harm them? Also, towards the end of the story, is it really realistic to expect Blade to totally escape harm when attacked by so many vampires? And although I'm not an avid follower of Marvel's vampires, and may have no right to speak on this point, can someone really become a half-vampire, and be curable to

boot?

But my point is that the story was a success conceptually. And you've got to have the concept right before the details make any difference. And in my view, you do have a good concept.

But in spite of all I've said, I still want to see THOR in B&W format, and to insure that I do, I've acquired a sub to THOR THE MIGHTY. And if you change the title of that mag to anything else, you is gonna have one mad dude on your hands.

Make Mine Monhooogs,

Dale A. Beach
Midland, Mich.

Dear Marvel,

I am writing in regard to the third issue of MARVEL PREVIEW; and aside from the cover the issue was very well done. It was a worthy successor to the two previous issues of MARVEL PREVIEW.

Realizing that BLADE must have been a last-minute replacement for THOR (who received and lost his own book in one breath!) I can almost accept the cover. Almost. The logo looked like it came from a Hanna-Barbara cartoon cell and Gray Morrow's cover painting was relatively poorly rendered. (The coloring and composition falling miles short of his cover on MP #2!)

The “frontispiece” was simple, but effective; glad to see Gene Colan doing his own inks & wash! Generally speaking, the art on the Blade-epic was excellent. I'm glad to see that Tony DeZuniga is learning how to draw black men finally. Rico Rival used to turn me off, but either I've gotten used to him (since THE SCARECROW in DEAD OF NIGHT #11) or he's drawing better (probably a combination of the two!) I didn't like the chapter he inked over DeZuniga's pencils, but his own work was gorgeous.

I'm sorry for doing it but being artistically inclined, I've neglected Chris Claremont's script until now. This epic is nothing to be ashamed about, it's nicely paced and tightly written...I liked it, what more can I say! Oh, I could mention some of the small errors, but the total was enjoyable, so why bother?

So Scott E. doesn't feel left out, I'll just say that his capsule history of Blade was good and short (you figure what that means!)

So TITAN's next, eh? We shall see! It better be good or...

Bruce Patterson
New York, NY

Dear Chris, Tony, Rico, Scott, Archie, and Stan,

What a milestone MARVEL PREVIEW #3 was! 56 pages of story and art, now that's got to be one of the longest illustrated stories in comic history. It must have set a record.

Gray Morrow's gorgeous cover painting was as excellent as I could ever hope for. Right with it, Gray! Say, is that coincidence, or something else, for you to use Merv Wolfman as the bearded vamp on the cover?? Sure resembles Merv, doesn't he?

You know, what with Blade being Merv Wolfman's creation, you would think that he would be the one to script the long story. Yet, Chris Claremont surprised me, and I'm sure many others, too, by turning out one heck of



a classic. Unfortunately, I have two gripes which I must bring to your attention. The first concerns the vampire Blade slew on page seven. I thought that when a wooden stake, or Blade's wooden knife, is embedded into a bloodsucker's heart that it instantly starts to turn to dust, and only the vamp's skeleton, plus the wooden object, stay intact. Well, why didn't this happen to any of the vampires in the story? The other has to do with the ending. I felt that you could have cleared up the Lady Marguerite/Dracula relationship a bit more. Also, remember that vampire London cop who got away scot free? Don't let the above statements lead you to assume that I did not like the script after all. Like I said, I felt it was a classic. The plot was very original, and the suspense and terror were quite apparent from the very first page to the last.

Tony DeZuniga's art was real nice, and Rico Rival's illustrations were above average for him. Gene Colan's frontispiece of Blade was a goodie.

Finally, before I close, I wanna leave some suggestions for stars to appear in future issues. These are some I hope will appear sometime or another: Silver Surfer, Moon-Knight, Black Knight, Darkoth, the Death-Demon, Sunfire, Galactus, Watcher, and Morbius. Make Mine the MARVEL LUNCH.

Jackie Frost
West Monroe, LA

P.S.: THOR THE MIGHTY was supposed to have been in this issue. What happened?

Well, Jack of' buddy, wouldja believe you were the only one who noticed any resemblance between Merv and the vampire on the cover, but come to think of it, he has been going around the office lately with a strange, thirsty look on his face.

And as far as THOR is concerned, see the parenthetical aside in Bruce Patterson's letter in reference to just that.

Dear Anonymous Horde of Armadillos (Known only to God and their Veterinarians):

Would that all series-without-a-book could go out in the blaze of glory surrounding BLADE's (hopefully temporary) exit. In the art department, the efforts by DeZuniga, Rival, and the DeZ.-R. team far surpassed the majority of their previous efforts (the only other efforts that can compare are Rival's SCARECROW and MAN-THING, and DeZuniga's PUNISHER). But while the book was a visual treat (not the least components of which were the Morrow cover and the Colan frontispiece), and true feast of the book was the verbal one. Chris has developed from a typical house hack into a competent scripter with touches of brilliance, whether on IRON FIST, X-MEN, the late (and, by this writer, quite lamented) WAR IS HELL, or his vampire outings in GIANT-SIZE DRACULA and Blade's earlier appearances. The “Night Josie Harper Died” epic was just that: the dialogue was only forced in a few spots, natural as hell in most. And Chris' high-point, narration, was top-flight. His characterizations were so clear, so off-beat, so frighteningly real that I had to keep looking over my shoulder to make sure there were no fanged fellows hiding in the drapes.

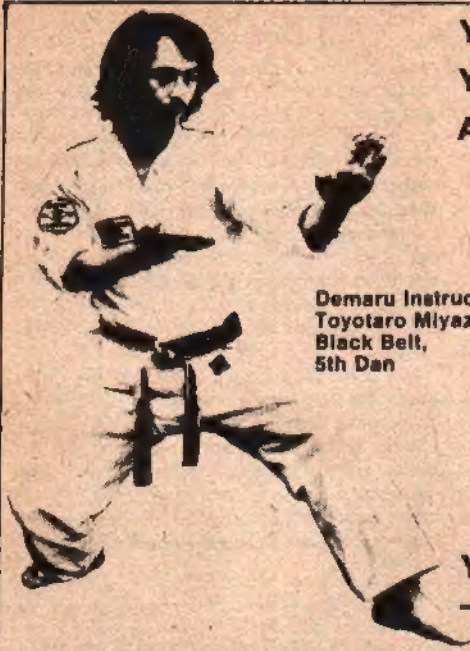
I hope to see more of Blade (as well as Kate Fraser), whether in color or B&W. If not...well, those wooden knives will have your names on them, bunkies! (Can wood pierce the armor of a vampire armadillo?)

Roger Klorosa
Box 1884
Dartmouth College
Hanover, NH 03755

We don't know; we got the afternoon paper. (Armadillo Extra Edition, of course.) And on that obscure note, we'd better close. Until then, let us hear from you.

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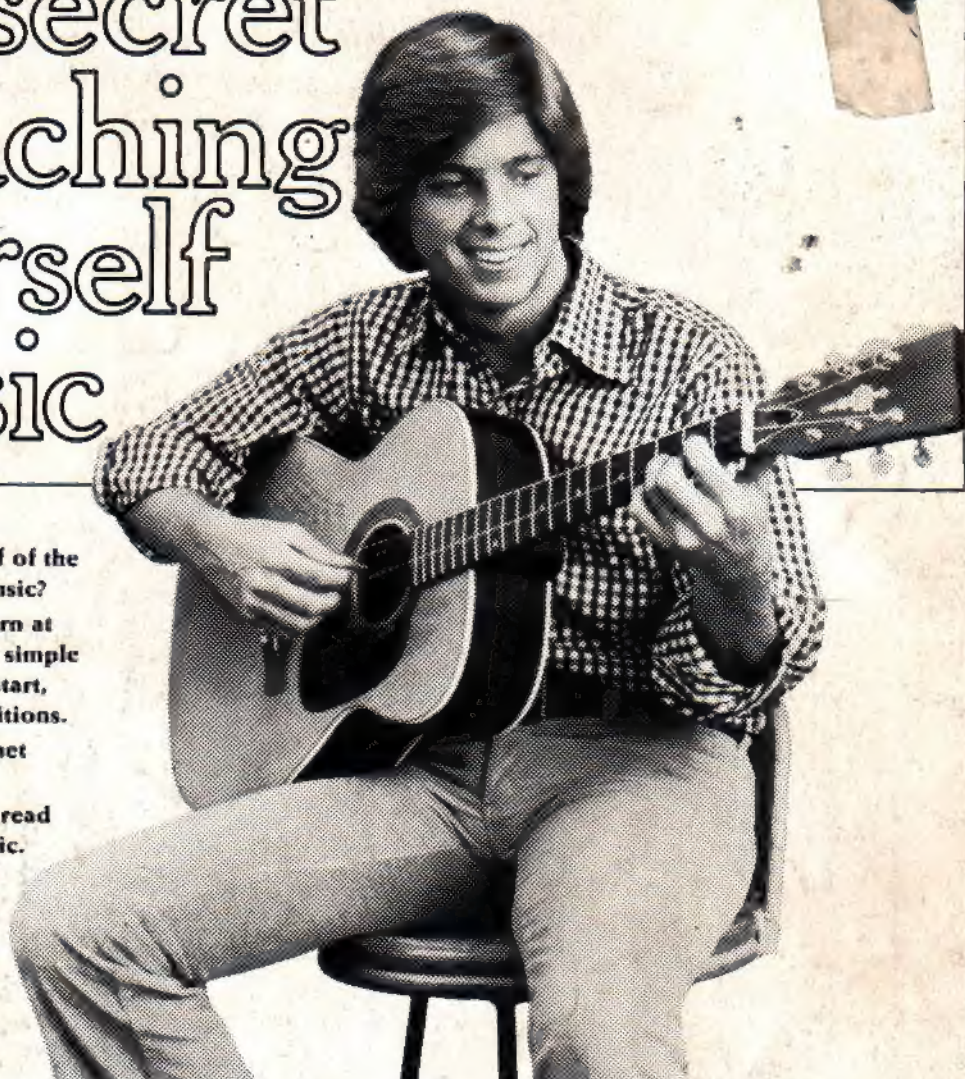
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